On Being a Journalist in Paris in the '50s

The Washington Monthly

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JonBenet, Diana, and The Princess Fantasy

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Letters

The Good Guys Sound Off

Michelle Cottle's report of dissension and disputes within the campaign finance reform community ("Where Are the Good Guys When We Need Them?" Sept. 1997) is an old and tired retread. While the groups sometimes disagree on specific, short-term legislative goals (as do affected groups on just about every issue facing Congress), all of us agree on the need to overhaul the current corrupt campaign finance system and on the importance of energizing citizens outside the Beltway to demand reform from their elected representatives. This is beginning to happen, but many citizens are rightly cynical about prospects for success.

Ms. Cottle and her armchair critics act as if their prescription for forcing Congress to act—"coordinated operations in all 50 states, with activists holding individual members of Congress accountable"—is easily achieved if only the groups would listen to their abstract strategies offered from the sidelines. Unfortunately, our organizations don't enjoy the unlimited corporate coffers that allow special interests to run slick ad campaigns and phony "astroturf" phone banks to promote their agendas. Strangely, none of Ms. Cottle's sources have come to us with information on how to fund the kind of national campaign that all of us would like to run.

FRANK CLEMENTE, DIRECTOR
Public Citizen's Congress Watch
Washington, DC

Too bad Michelle Cottle and her unnamed source(s) were so hellbent on telling a tale of dissension in the campaign finance reform movement that she didn't bother to check on current reality. If Public Campaign is "in everyone's crosshairs," why is every group but one that is mentioned in her article formally endorsing our work?

The current reality is that a consensus about a new strategy and a new proposal is emerging that every organization mentioned in Cottle's story is working on together in the states. "Clean Money Campaign Reform" has captured the imagination of citizen activists throughout the country. The heat generated there will be felt in Washington in due course. And every national reform group will be at the table together when that happens. In the meantime, the fault for the failure of campaign finance reform lies not with the public interest organizations but with the elite coterie of elected officials and their powerful backers who thus far have blocked any meaningful action.

ELLEN S. MILLER
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Public Campaign
Washington, DC

Change of Heart?

In *The New Federalist Papers*, the authors' advice to eschew most of the constitutional amendments currently on the table may well have merit. However, it is not advice I'd have expected Lloyd Cutler to embrace so warmly in his review ("If It Ain't Broke ...," Sept. 1997).

Only a decade ago, Cutler joined Sen. Nancy Kassebaum and C. Douglas Dillion as co-chair of the Committee on the Constitutional System. The committee's recommendations included multiple amendments such as four-year terms for House members; eight-year terms for senators; permitting members of Congress to serve in the cabinet; giving the House a role in the ratification of treaties; and relaxing the requirements for treaty ratification. Cutler and others spent a number of years trying to energize support for this agenda. Yet no committee recommendation was ever implemented; most never received a serious hearing in Congress; and none ever caught the attention of the public.

Unsuccessful at amending the Constitution to suit his diagnosis of the "strain in our governing processes," Cutler now counsels leaving well enough alone. Does this transformation represent a change in Cutler's understanding of American politics, or is it just sour grapes?

MARK P. PETRACCA
Irvine, CA

The Big Picture

So 42 percent of contributions to senators come from out of state and 56 percent out of district for the House. You ask: "Why do we allow [this]?" ("Tilting at Windmills," July/Aug. 1997)

Do you have any experience with provincialism? parochialism? In a word, this is the curse of states' rights politics. Long ago as a white protester I escaped from Jim Crow environments. Millions of us are now disenfranchised by unbalanced, unreasonable legislators confirmed in predatory agenda single-mindedness: hard-sell con artists masquerading as representatives from our bailiwicks, elected by and for the people. The provincial majority? Maybe. Maybe not.

In order to survive with a ray of hope, the rest of us support as best we can individuals in Congress who, regardless of their home base, represent our broader viewpoints of democracy. They need us and we need them.

Disunited in conflict, America is still blessed with wiggle room if only we dare to overcome our adversaries who curse us. Democracy "allows" us this freedom, that's "why."

DOROTHY FRISBIE
Allentown, PA

More on Merit

I am delighted with Nicholas Lemann's "The SAT Meritocracy" (Sept. 1997) because of its direct hit on the presumption that by offering everyone an education at public expense we provide everyone an equal educational opportunity.

As Mr. Lemann reports, when success in society is based primarily on academic success, and society gears its public education system to that end, we get a small but very influential subculture of "mandarins" who care more about themselves and their status than about society as a whole. We also get, as he implies, another subculture "consigned to life at the bottom."

Lemann writes about "a decent

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basic education" but doesn't spell out what it should be. If he means nothing more than having learned to read, write, think, understand basic arithmetic concepts, and grasp the responsibilities of citizenship, I agree. If he means something more, I disagree. We will never have equal educational opportunity in this country until the education establishment embraces the notion that each child should learn the aforementioned basics before he/she is required to learn academic subject matter.

We've known for decades that people learn at different rates, yet we totally ignore this fact by placing illiterate students in academic classes they have no business being in—no matter how filtered or watered-down the course content may be.

DANIEL BORREGARD
Pitman, NJ

What is missing from Nicholas Lemann's comments on meritocracy is an acknowledgment that the American version provides second and third chances, more than is true of any other country, especially Michael Young's England. As a result of the mandarin tendencies that Lemann deplores, a mere bachelor's degree is insufficient as a ticket of entry to the mandarin professions, so attending an Ivy League college is less important than where you get your advanced degree. And, once on the job, the school you went to is important only insofar as contacts are useful for advancement; most work is indeed judged on its merits.

The real reason people hate the meritocratic elite is that they are the winners the rest of us could have been. In a caste society, where one's position in life is predetermined, an inability to rise above one's caste is no cause for shame. But in a meritocracy, the option to rise becomes a commandment to rise. Failure to do so is regarded as a personal defect. And, no matter how far we rise, there is a suspicion that we should have risen further.

WILLIAM A. BAKER
Bloomfield, NJ

Trouble at the Top

Col. Harry Summers' article ("An Officer and a Gentleman," Sept. 1997) made some good points. But I think he failed to make his case overall.

I entered one of the service academies in 1971 and left the military in 1980. And I can't see how the "permissive" or "liberal" policies initiated starting in the '70s (beer in the barracks, more relaxed hair styles, and so on) caused the breakdown in discipline and basic morality epitomized by My Lai. Rather the problem stemmed from a combination of societal and internal factors: attitudes about the Vietnam war itself, as well as other upheavals society was undergoing with respect to drugs, sex, institutional authority, and the like.

As important, however, were the ways military leaders instituted the new "liberalizing" policies. It seemed to those of us at the bottom of the military hierarchy that our leaders were acting not as they would in battle—calmly but quickly, evaluating the situation and likely outcomes, then giving orders based on their evaluations. Instead, they seemed unable to size up the situation, vacillating about what to do, then acting in a panic mode—almost impulsively, caving in to the anarchy visible on the news every night. Much as an animal can sense fear, troublemakers in the military exploited their leaders' uncertainty and vacillation. In response, rather than holding fast to the policies that fostered "good order and discipline," treating everyone fairly, and getting rid of those who either couldn't or wouldn't exercise self-restraint and enforce discipline, the leaders often seemed to the rest of us to be coddling the troublemakers.

Col. Summers is correct that "constant vigilance against threats to 'good military order and discipline' is always wise." But I don't believe further liberalization (e.g., doing away with the proscription against adultery) would destroy order and discipline any more than has allowing servicemembers to live off base destroyed it. It's as much the manner in which policies are implemented, as the policies themselves, that preserves order and discipline.

ANDREW WEBB
San Diego, CA

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Tilting at Windmills

BY CHARLES PETERS

The Joy of Jaywalking • Beauty School Dropouts • How Luciano Got Lucky
D.C.'s Under-the-Cover Cops • Lowest Common Denominator Lobbies

IF YOU'RE A DRIVER, RIGHT-ON-red is a blessing, but to pedestrians—especially those of us who are less nimble than we used to be—it is just plain bad news. Motorists have become so accustomed to making the turn that they barely slow down, so as you attempt to cross the street at an intersection you can find yourself in danger from three directions and wishing you had one more eye or a head that swiveled.

Crossing in the middle of the block often makes more sense, which is why prudent jaywalking, which we define as not taking the remotest risk of having a car run into you, has been advocated by this magazine for many years. Unfortunately, like so many of our causes, it has not been widely embraced by respectable authorities. In fact, I once got a ticket for it. So I'm delighted to report that at least one official has joined our crusade: Jeff Pawlinski, an alderman in Milwaukee. He is especially welcomed at this time because, as Jessica McBride of the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* puts it, "jaywalking tickets are back in vogue as part of the 'quality of life' policing strategy" adopted in many cities. The strategy is based on the belief that zero tolerance of smaller crimes prevents larger ones. There is some wisdom in the strategy but none in deeming prudent jaywalking a crime.

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WHEN THE FBI FINDS IT HAS AN incompetent employee on its hands, does it fire him? No, it transfers the employee to another job. It does not even keep a record of what he did wrong. According to a memo obtained by *The Wall Street Journal*'s Laurie P. Cohen, former FBI Deputy General Counsel Stephen Robinson told Justice Department investigators that "the FBI does not document poor work performance but transfers poor performers to other duties." Why not document? Because, explains Cohen, "there's concern that written evaluations might get into the hands of defense lawyers who might use them to impeach FBI witnesses or overturn convictions."

He found his girlfriend in bed with a supposedly on-duty D.C. detective. The bed, by the way, was not even located in the District of Columbia.

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AS YOU GROW older, you find yourself taking an increasing interest in the quality of obituaries. You want them to be fair to your friends' reputations and, when the time comes, your own. That's why I was incensed when an Associated Press report on the death of one of my boyhood heroes, Johnny Vander Meer, said that while he had pitched the only two consecutive no-hitters in major league history, he had had "an otherwise average career." However, I was relieved the next day to see that *The New York Times* got it right, noting that Vander Meer had led the National League in strikeouts for three seasons, and had been named to the All-Star team four times.

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IT'S FUNNY HOW PEOPLE WHO hate affirmative action for black children love it for their own. Perhaps the most common example is the alumni legacy where preference in admission is given to the offspring of graduates. Another is when a rich alumnus intervenes on behalf of the child of a friend. I know of a case where Harvard changed a rejection to an acceptance after a phone call from an alumnus whose potential as a donor was immense.

Now comes the journalist Frank Greve with another example of how affirmative action is embraced by the privileged when it favors the privileged: admission assistance for the offspring and friends of government officials. Rep. Dan Burton's daughter was admitted to veterinary school, according to Greve, after Burton had intervened to protect a $23 million grant to the school.

Georgetown University, which since 1980 has received $89 million in grants courtesy of the House Appropriations Committee has admitted four children of Appropriation Committee members during that time.

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ARE THE AARP AND OTHER lobbies for seniors misrepresenting their members when these organizations oppose higher premiums for the affluent as a way to save Medicare? It certainly looks like it, judging from a recent poll by the *Los Angeles Times* that found the higher premiums were supported by 59 percent of respondents 65 or older and opposed by only 32 percent. The explanation may be that lobbies often are controlled by the loudmouth extremists who are feared by the headquarters staff in Washington. Bill Keller, who is now with the *The New York Times*, did an excellent piece on this phenomenon for the *Monthly* some years ago. (See "Lowest Common Denominator Lobbying," May 1983.)

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A NEW MOVIE, "HOODLUM," depicts the late Thomas E. Dewey, the former racket-busting prosecutor, governor of New York, and Republican presidential candidate in 1944 and 1948, as a crook who regularly took bribes from criminals. This seems like another example of the Oliver Stone approach to history with which Hollywood is misinforming entire generations of American youth. I never heard of a credible accusation of Dewey's acceptance of a cash bribe, and since I was intensely interested in politics, and intensely disliked Dewey, and was eager to believe anything bad about him, I'm sure any evidence of his wrongdoing would be engraved in my memory.

There was, however, one episode in his career that did strike me as a tad suspicious. It was the pardon of Lucky Luciano in 1946. Why would Dewey, who had helped put Luciano in jail, unleash this evil man on a world that Luciano proceeded to poison with narcotics for almost two decades? Could it be that Dewey had made a deal with the mob-dominated New York City Democrats? He lets Luciano out, the Democrats put up a weak candidate for governor and Dewey coasts to re-election.

An interesting sidelight to the story is that the official justification for Luciano's pardon was that he had helped the Allied war effort in Sicily. This was testified to by a Navy officer who was then rewarded with an appointment as Commissioner of Air and Marine for the City of New York by one of the mob's greatest friends, Democratic Mayor William O'Dwyer. Incidentally, deal-making between statehouse Republicans and big-city Democrats wasn't confined to New York in those days. Similar common interests were often found by the Daley machine in Chicago and Republicans in Springfield whose dedication to the public service was frequently tempered by a keen interest in cash.

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A RECENT REPORT BY THE U.S. Department of Education Inspector General revealed that in just one year, taxpayers and students spent more than a billion dollars on training cosmetologists even though there were already one million more cosmetologists than were needed. And the General Accounting Office suggests that student loan default rates for proprietary school students, which are twice that of students attending other schools, "may stem in large part from a mismatch between their training and the skills employers demand." What the GAO really means is that profit-hungry school operators are exploiting the desire of thousands of young women to work in what we used to call beauty parlors even though there aren't nearly enough jobs awaiting them.

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THE LAW FIRM THAT MAKES the most money through lobbying for tobacco companies is Verner, Liipfert, Bernhard, McPherson & Hand. Why do they do it?

An explanation often given is that it's a lawyer's duty to represent unpopular clients. But too many of them seem to see that duty as confined to unpopular clients who have the kind of money the tobacco industry has been paying Verner Liipfert—$4.7 million in the first six months of this year.

Others will say, "We're doing it for the firm." If you're a conscientious senior partner, as some of those at Verner Liipfert certainly are, you'll worry about the firm's obligation to the young associates it has taken on. Income must be provided for the young people, the conscientious partner will tell you, although sometimes you suspect income for himself is also a consideration.

But why can't he tell the young lawyer he's hiring, "We're going to run the firm in a way that you can be proud of; we will not take clients that you'll be ashamed of and therefore you might not earn as much as you might at a firm without scruples."

Of course, Verner Liipfert has a bigger problem than paying its young associates. It has taken on a roster of senior stars—people like Bob Dole, Lloyd Bentsen, George Mitchell, and Ann Richards—whose names and influence are meant to attract big clients but in the meantime are costing the firm big bucks.

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THE ONLY TIME I EVER TALKED at length with Howell Raines was at a lunch we had shortly before he went to New York to take over the *Times'* editorial page. It was a warm occasion, full of fun and marked by unusual rapport. One of the few things that troubled me at all was his obvious intense dislike of Bill Clinton. Over the years this has become a problem, particularly because his feelings are shared by two of the op-ed page's most influential columnists, Maureen

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Dowd and William Safire. Their view, now shared by most hip journalists, is expressed by an editorial that appeared on September 22 and began, "the need for an independent counsel to look into White House fund-raising during 1996 has long been obvious."

It certainly does not seem obvious to me. It will become so if and when evidence is produced that Bill Clinton was bribed to act against the public interest. But so long as the only sure case against the White House is one of selling access, the defense that everyone does it, while it may have its imperfections, does seem a convincing reason not to single out Bill Clinton and Al Gore.

What does seem obvious to me is that the wise course is to reform campaign financing to eliminate the need to sell access. The only fair alternative would be to turn independent counsels loose on everyone who has sold access, which would have much the same effect as the Japanese 747 in Tom Clancy's latest thriller. It crashes into the House of Representatives during a joint session with the Senate to hear an address by the president. Practically the entire government is wiped out—just what would happen if we prosecuted everyone who has sold access.

If you doubt the universality of guilt, the *Times* itself has over the years documented that everyone does in fact do it. Most recently, a *Times* op-ed piece by Erika Niedowski described how Republicans who serve on the fund-raising investigation committees of both houses of Congress have themselves committed violations of election laws so blatant that they have been fined by that toothless tiger, the Federal Elections Commission. They include Robert Bennett and Robert Smith of the Senate committee as well as fellow member Arlen Specter, whom the FEC ordered to pay $233,000 for accepting illegal corporate contributions. Sam Brownback, another of the Senate committee Republicans, is the subject of a pending FEC case. Dan Burton, the chairman of the House campaign finance committee is under investigation by the Justice Department as to whether his own fund-raising practices have been legal and no less than six of his committee colleagues have been fined recently by the FEC.

The Virginia lottery actually has an ad featuring Lady Luck, who has a magic wand that turns people who do not play the lottery into chickens.

Now just as we go to press comes the news that *The Washington Post* has uncovered a videotape of Ronald Reagan fund-raising in the East Room. Should we put him in jail too?

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And back to the cigarette companies, they don't just use Washington lobbying firms to influence officials and they don't confine their efforts to Washington. As Morton Mintz pointed out in these pages last year, state officials are also targeted. The latest example to be exposed is Governor Tommy Thompson of Wisconsin, who, according to the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, took trips to England, Australia, and southern Africa that were paid for by innocent-sounding foundations such as the New York Society for International Affairs, which turned out to be largely funded by Phillip Morris. Not coincidentally, Phillip Morris executives accompanied Thompson on those trips.

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Ironically on the same day *The Washington Post* broke the story about the videotape of Ronald Reagan's fund-raising pitch in the East Room, *The New York Times* op-ed page devoted its most prominent position to a piece by Lyn Nofziger asserting that Reagan had never done what the East Room tape shows him doing.

• • • • • • • •

Here's something else to worry about—outer space is littered with junk. According to Jennifer Harper of *The Washington Times*, millions of pieces of orbital debris cruise around the world at 22,000 mph. One U.S. satellite was struck an average of 5,000 times a year during its six years in orbit, Harper adds, noting that "smaller Russian and U.S. satellites have been lost after collisions in the past few years." What's going to happen to those astronauts? Maybe I should teach them how to jaywalk.

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Not only did Ronald Reagan make that fund-raising pitch in the East Room, he also made phone calls to congressional fund-raisers according to the Associated Press. And guess who suggested he make the calls! Newt Gingrich.

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Did you see where three of the biggest HMOs are asking for tougher government regulation? They believe a federally mandated patients' bill of rights is the only way to restore faith in the managed care industry. Did you ever think you'd see the day when private groups asked to be regulated? Maybe government is making a comeback. Certainly one impressive sign that it is came in a recent column in *The Wall Street Journal* by William Kristol and David Brooks, which asked, "How can Americans love their nation if they hate its government?"

Just as liberalism came close to destroying itself by being

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blindly pro-government for so many years, conservatives have been in danger of losing touch with the American people by being reflexively antigovernment. There is a strong strain of Huck Finn's common sense in this country. It does not respond well to intellectual rigidity. So their fellow conservatives would be wise to listen to Kristol and Brooks. The truly important role for them is not to attack government but to fix it. Much of it is not working well, having suffered for too long from a shortage of constructive criticism as the liberals couldn't find anything bad to say about it and the conservatives anything good.

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NOT ONLY DO WE PAY OUR SENators more-than-adequate salaries, which just got raised by the way, and more-than-generous pensions, we also subsidize their and their staff's lunches to the tune of $20,000 per senator per year, according to Ann Reilly Dowd of *Money* magazine. Senators pay less than half for cups of coffee and almost a third less for a bowl of soup at the Senate restaurant than they would have to pay at a comparable nearby restaurant The Monocle. And The Monocle, while a perfectly nice place, does not provide nearly as spacious nor as grand a setting as the Senate dining room. So we are in effect subsidizing both the senators' meals and their sense of importance.

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A NEW THRILLER, *The Winner*, BY David Baldacci, has a plot that's based on the corrupting effect of a national lottery. It's the Book-of-the-Month-Club choice for December, so it could be a best-seller. I hope so, because the nation needs to wake up to the evil of government-sponsored lotteries which already exist in many states, although the federal government has not gotten into the act as it has in Baldacci's novel.

To him, the evil lies in having the government pick the pockets of the poor and being corrupted by attempts to fix and cover-up the fix of the national lottery. For me, the central evil lies in the advertising of the lottery. It's at least arguable that, since some people are going to gamble anyway, the state should try to keep the profits from falling into the hands of criminals and earn a little bit of money for itself by offering people the opportunity to gamble through a state-sponsored lottery. So far, the argument is similar to the one for legalizing dope, to which I'm sympathetic. But advertising the lottery tempts people who are not already gamblers. The Virginia lottery actually has an ad featuring Lady Luck, who has a magic wand that turns people who do not play the lottery into chickens. The state is saying that not only should you play the lottery, but you're chicken if you don't.

It's funny how people who hate affirmative action for black children love it for their own.

This is as indefensible as advertising dope would be. (And by the way, doesn't it help you see how indefensible cigarette and liquor advertising are?)

State-sponsored lotteries are really just another con game by the rich, a way to shift the burden of paying for state services from themselves to the poor. Much of the income that the state would normally be asking the rich to contribute for those services is no longer required because the poor are footing the bill through the lottery. In Virginia, the lottery took $924 million this year; in Maryland the take will be more than $1 billion.

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A FEW DAYS AFTER WRITING THE previous item saying the federal government was not involved in the lottery business came the news that, if it is not now involved, it certainly wants to be. According to a report in *The Washington Post*, the Postal Service just spent $20,000 to sponsor a convention of the North American Association of State and Provincial Lotteries where the service pitched lottery operators to use the mail to increase "player participation."

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IN SOME PLACES GOVERNMENT is so bad, it's a joke. But we can't just laugh when what's involved is a government function that must be performed. The homicide unit of Washington, D.C.'s police force is an example. Forty-nine detectives, roughly half of those in the unit, failed to close a single case in the first six months of this year. Is the problem that those fellows are underpaid? Not exactly. Twelve earned more than $100,000. The top regular pay is only $52,000. Overtime brought in the extra dough—in one case giving the officer a total income of $150,119. What are the officers doing when they're working so hard? In one case, thanks to an indignant citizen, we know. He found his girlfriend in bed with a supposedly on-duty detective. The bed, by the way was not even located in the District of Columbia, but in Prince George's County, Maryland.

And in case you think law enforcement ineptitude is just a problem in the District, consider the recent horror stories from the IRS and the FBI's performance at Waco, Ruby Ridge, and the Olympics. There are solutions to these problems, but we've got to get a lot more smart people, including conservatives, trying to think about them.

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BECAUSE WE ARE CONCERNED about the roots of snobberies that make some people feel superior to others, this magazine has long been interested in the way taste began to be widely used as a measure of class during the 1950s, a trend that has grown steadily until today. One result is the art museums that were quiet backwaters in the 1940s are now crowded, and long lines wait patiently to see even minor new exhibits. A similar change has happened with food. Practically everybody ate standard American dishes in the '40s and practically no one knew anything about wine. One influence that changed this was the trip to Europe, itself a badge of taste, that became standard in the '50s. Another, pointed out in an article by Karen Lehrman in *U.S. News & World Report*, was Julia Child. Published in 1961, her *Mastering the Art of French Cooking* quickly replaced Irma Rombauer's *Joy of Cooking* as America's culinary bible.

There's a lot that's desirable in having more people know about good art and good food. But as Lehrman points out, "Many of Julia's pupils who learned to appreciate the finer points of *foie gras* and to choose the best wine to accompany it also learned to disdain the benighted proles who were still eating Ritz crackers and Cheez Whiz." The upwardly mobile, explains a consumer pollster to Louis Uchitelle of *The New York Times*, who recently wrote a related story, like to "buy what others can't afford. What they buy has to be the best and differentiate them."

So not only have we had an increase in snobbery, it has been accompanied by a trend toward more expensive and upscale ways to spend your money. The more people want to spend, the less they want to save. And the less they want to spend on taxes that help the rest of the community. All this is happening as the disparity in income between rich and poor continues to rise. The forces that separate us from one another seem to be winning.

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SPEAKING OF DOPE LEGALIZATION, whenever you mention it, you're told horror stories of what it will cause, beginning years ago with "Reefer Madness." One of the most effective of these horrors in recent years has been the specter of crack babies. Now it develops, according to a study recently reported in the health section of *The Washington Post*, that the "children of cocaine-abusing mothers are no worse off than others in urban poverty."

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THE OVERTIME RACKET IS NOT confined to the District of Columbia police department. West Virginia has discovered that overtime abuses in just one of its agencies, the Department of Highways, could be costing as much as $26 million a year. Since retirement pensions are based on the retirees' highest three consecutive years of pay, excessive and probably fictitious overtime is most prevalent among employees nearing retirement age, reports *The Charleston Gazette*. The state's transportation secretary complains, "We've had 65-year-old men who were averaging 70-hour weeks—30 hours of overtime—50 weeks a year."

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A RECENT HEADLINE IN *The Washington Times*, "Israeli intelligence in disarray after mishaps," carries a lesson about government agencies. Even the best can go bad. During my early years in Washington in the 1960s, the IRS was one of the most respected agencies in town. The Post Office, which was a marvel of efficiency when I was a boy in the '30s, had become a disaster by the '70s. The lesson is that agencies need to be looked at critically and regularly with an eye to whether they're performing their mission well and whether their mission still needs to be performed or redefined or abandoned.

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YOU'RE NOT GOING TO BELIEVE it, but I have something nice to say about lawyers. To be sure, the good deed happened a long time ago—in 1953—but it was a really good deed. At the height of the McCarthy period, leading members of the Philadelphia bar volunteered to represent nine of their fellow citizens who were charged with violating the Smith Act, a law that made it a crime to advocate communist theory. The defendants were not spies or saboteurs, simply enthusiastic Marxists. But the times were such that eminent jurists like Learned Hand and Felix Frankfurter upheld the Smith Act, even though it was a truly horrible assault on the First Amendment.

You don't have to think very long to see that freedom of political discussion is the heart of the First Amendment. You can lose every other liberty, but if you can say anything you want in the realm of political ideas, you have the means of regaining whatever other freedom has been lost. But if you lose the freedom of political discourse, you're helpless. That's why the Smith Act was so bad and why it now seems so incredible that not only Hand and Frankfurter, but the distinguished Second Circuit bench of which Hand was a member and Frankfurter's United States Supreme Court upheld it.

Those Philadelphia lawyers were courageous. And they weren't a bunch of guys who couldn't find other legal work. They were the cream of the local bar. You can read the story in a new book *Being Red in Philadelphia* by Sherman Labovitz. The author's prose is occasionally contaminated by the communist rhetoric of his past, but the story he tells is important and inspiring. ●

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Tidbits Outrages

Moon Over Carolina

The North Carolina Court of Appeals recently tossed out a conviction for indecent exposure because it ruled that the law does not apply to the display of a person's buttocks.

Truth in Advertising

An ad for Pepperidge Farm's new Reduced Fat Fudge Striped Chocolate Chunk Cookies boasts that the product contains "only real ingredients."

Gentle Whipping Is OK Too

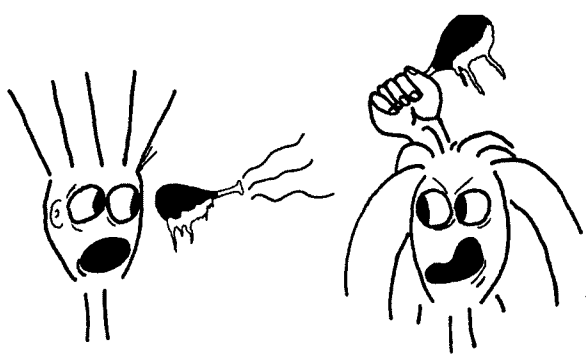
A Brussels court recently clarified the legality of sadomasochistic sex. Light consensual slapping is permissible. Use of electric shocks, clamps, and weights is not.

The Dim Blue Line

A recent applicant for a job with the New London, Conn., police department was turned down for the position after taking a standardized test because he had answered too many of the questions correctly.

Fowl Play

A Florida woman was recently arrested for hurling frozen chicken legs at her boyfriend.



ART: CEDRIC JACKSON

Just in Case Hoboken Decides to Invade

The Newark city police force has obtained a free military tank from the U.S. Defense Department.

Dat's Kapital-ism

After visiting the birthplace of Karl Marx in Trier, Germany, tourists can now head over to the Marx Plaza and shop at such boutiques as the Marx House of Fashion.

I Could Tell You the Title, But I'd Have to Kill You

The CIA has released a cookbook offering such recipes as "Cobra Soup" and Russian "Coleslaw Soufflé." The names of nearly all of the contributors are classified.

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One Man's Activist ...

What Republicans really mean when they condemn judicial activism

By Herman Schwartz

Judges, watch your backs: The congressional Republicans have officially declared war on "judicial activists," judges who go beyond interpreting the law into the realm of what GOP lawmakers consider "making" the law. Rep. Bob Barr of Georgia is but one of several Republicans to denounce the current crop of jurists for "assuming for themselves the powers and responsibilities of legislators or executives"—an offense those on the right say must not be treated lightly. They have been particularly incensed over a few recent decisions setting aside death sentences, excluding evidence in a drug case, and blocking the implementation of the California referendum ending affirmative action programs. This May, Barr joined Majority Whip Tom DeLay of Texas in calling for the impeachment of judges as a "proper tool" for "political offenses," with an impeachable offense defined by DeLay as "whatever a majority of the House of Representatives considers it to be at a given moment in history." Their stated goal, according to DeLay: "The judges need to be intimidated."

With an eye toward weeding out future judicial activists, GOP senators have virtually hijacked the appointment process. Judiciary Committee Chairman Orrin Hatch has declared he will not "stand by to see judicial activists named to the federal bench." To this end, Hatch and his fellow Republicans have instituted a massive slowdown on judicial appointments. According to political scientist Sheldon Goldman of the University of Massachusetts, who has been studying the nomination process for 40 years, the Republicans are engaged in an effort "unprecedented in its scope ... to deny the Clinton administration as many nominations as possible."

Among their favorite tactics is the imposition of increasingly intrusive requests for the nominee's opinions. For example, last year Margaret Morrow, the first woman to serve as president of the California Bar Association, was unanimously approved by the Senate Judiciary Committee. Because of Republican foot-dragging, however, Morrow's nomination didn't come up for a floor vote during the 1996 session. Moreover, when the Senate reconvened this year, Republican Charles Grassley of Iowa demanded Morrow's position on every one of 160 California initiatives in the last 10 years. (Grassley eventually scaled back his demands—after all, how much intimidation is necessary?)

Other GOP legislators have pushed for even more direct action to keep "activists" off the bench. Sen. Slade Gorton of Washington tried unsuccessfully to have Congress cut into the president's nominating power by requiring the president to get advance approval for a judicial candidate's ideology from the senators representing the circuit to which the candidate would be nominated. For his part, Sen. Phil Gramm of Texas pledged to block a Clinton nominee on the basis that the person had been "politically active."

Such delaying tactics have already borne fruit. In all of 1996, the Senate let through only 17 trial judges and no appellate judges, an unprecedentedly small number. This year's Congress seems to be following the same route: As of September 30, the Senate had confirmed just 18 judges, leaving 96 vacancies on the federal bench—including around 30 that the Administrative Office of the United States Courts calls "judicial emergencies," judgeships unfilled for more than 18 months. Some slots have been vacant since 1994. For a while, President Clinton provided the Republicans with a convenient excuse for the outrageous number of vacancies by sending up very few nominations. However, this cover is no longer available, as the president has now nominated some 70

Herman Schwartz *is the author of* Packing the Courts: The Conservative Campaign to Rewrite the Constitution.

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judges, many originally sent up during the last Congress.

The conservative crusade against activist judges has been even more effective on the state level, where elective judges who voted in ways displeasing to Republicans have been denied re-election by organized electoral campaigns. In Tennessee, for example, Judge Penny J. White heard only one death penalty case in her 19 months on the state Supreme Court. In that case, she voted with her colleagues to order a new death-sentence hearing for a convicted murderer. Less than two months later, she was denied reappointment in a routine retention election, the victim of a Tennessee Republican Party campaign against her. Likewise, Nebraska Supreme Court Justice David Lanphier was ousted last November for having voted against a term-limits law and in favor of a retrial for some defendants convicted of second-degree murder.

The result of the conservative campaign is a massive pile-up in the federal courts. On the West Coast, oral arguments in some 600 cases were canceled last year, and the Second Circuit in New York has had to cancel sittings as well. One trial judge in Illinois put all of his civil cases on hold and went an entire year hearing only criminal cases, while a San Diego district court holds only about 10 civil trials a year.

The Republicans justify themselves by arguing that the damage they're inflicting is all in the name of defending the constitutional separation of powers against judicial activism. But oddly enough, Republican crusaders seem to have overlooked an important point: Some of the worst "activist" offenders on the bench today are the conservative members of the Supreme Court.

Action Packed

Despite DeLay and company's condemnation of judges who they say "have thrown out the Constitution" in favor of their own wisdom, over the years, it is the Supreme Court's conservatives who have frequently done just that.

For example, in the 1976 case *Nat'l League of Cities v. Usery*, Chief Justice William Rehnquist (then an associate justice) succeeded in coalescing a majority to overturn federal legislation requiring state and local governments to meet the minimum-wage and maximum-hours provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act. Unable to rely on any constitutional text, Rehnquist invoked vague notions of "state sovereignty."

More recently, this June the five conservative justices on the court overturned the Brady Gun Control bill because it required local sheriffs to do a background check on a prospective gun purchaser. As in the Nat'l League of Cities case, the conservative justices conceded that they could not actually derive any limitations on federal power from the text of the 10th Amendment, which simply "reserves" to the states the "powers not delegated to the United States." As Justice O'Connor admitted, this is "essentially a tautology," because the amendment says nothing about what powers are in fact reserved. Instead, the justices relied solely on their own conception of what "state sovereignty" and "the federal structure" entail.

In some cases, the conservative majority has gone so far as to openly rewrite constitutional text. The 11th Amendment to the Constitution explicitly excludes from the federal judicial power only suits "against one of the United States by citizens of another State." Nevertheless, two years ago the court's conservatives rewrote the amendment to also exclude suits against a state by its own citizens—in the process overruling a recent precedent, and overturning a federal statute. And just this year, the court overturned the Religious Freedom Restoration Act, a law passed unanimously in the House and by a 97-3 vote in the Senate, which sought to expand protection for religious freedom, particularly for minority sects.

Of course, in the current antigovernment climate, the argument that the justices are simply curtailing federal power in order to honor states' rights is a popular one. It is also flawed. Take the issue of affirmative action: Since 1978, when the Bakke case involving the University of California's decision to set aside 16 out of 100 places for minorities at the Davis School of Medicine was decided, conservatives have voted to strike down virtually every affirmative action plan to come before the court, regardless of whether the plan was adopted by state or federal legislators or officials. Until 1989, they failed except with respect to employee layoffs. With the arrival of Justice Kennedy in 1988, however, the balance shifted, and with its ruling on the 1989 Richmond, Va., case, the Supreme Court struck down some 236 state and local affirmative action plans.

Another example of this indifference to states' rights is the area of criminal justice. Since the Nixon appointees took over in 1972, the conservative majority has steadily cut into the Warren Court decisions establishing rights for the accused. Disregarding its long-standing policy not to hear state cases involving federal constitutional questions if those cases could be decided under state law, the court has reached out to overturn decisions of more liberal state courts.

What becomes increasingly clear from the court's record is that conservative justices are not so much concerned with strict adherence to the Constitution as with promoting conservative values. In none of the

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aforementioned cases, or numerous others like them, has the conservatives' purported zeal for judicial restraint or states' rights prevented them from riding roughshod over state and local legislation or court rulings that they disagreed with. And although the court's liberals have joined conservatives in some of their most controversial rulings, like overturning the Religious Freedom Restoration Act, even Clint Bolick's Institute for Justice has admitted that the court's conservatives are more inclined to strike down both federal and state laws than Clinton's two appointees, Ruth Bader Ginsburg and Stephen Breyer.

So why aren't Messrs. Hatch, DeLay, Barr, and their friends threatening to impeach the high court's most active "activists"? Simple: Like their conservative counterparts on the courts, congressional Republicans don't object to "judicial activism" per se. They simply oppose "liberal judicial activism." As one federal judge put it, "The Republicans define 'activist' according to their political agenda. It's OK to be an activist if you're striking down affirmative action and gun-free school laws." Or, as American Bar Association President and staunch conservative N. Lee Cooper puts it: "Activism [is] a phrase that, like beauty, seems to be in the eye of the beholder. It is fair to say that for the most vocal critics in today's debate, judicial activism is conveniently tossed around as a means of condemning any position that doesn't fit the critic's ideological mold."

In fact, the political debate over "judicial activism" has undergone a 180-degree turn in the last 70 years. During Franklin Roosevelt's administration, when the largely conservative Supreme Court was striking down New Deal legislation, liberals were up in arms about jurists' overstepping their constitutional bounds. And upon being named to the court, FDR appointee Justice Felix Frankfurter adhered to a strict policy of judicial restraint, reflecting his belief that the court should, whenever possible, defer to the will of the people as expressed through the legislature.

Today, of course, it's the conservatives who are up in arms. Their current campaign against "liberal judicial activists" is part of an ideological struggle that began in earnest as a reaction to the transformation of American life that started in the 1950s: the increased openness and freedom; the refusal of those outside the favored circle of power and privilege—women, blacks, homosexuals—to stay in their place; the ever-more powerful role of government in social and economic matters, and concomitant with that, the implicit devaluation of the rugged, Darwinian individualist. The federal courts were crucial to these changes, making them a natural target for the backlash. The "Impeach Earl Warren" signs that went up all over the South in the wake of the Brown school desegregation decision were among the first expressions of that reaction.

With the Reagan Revolution of 1981, the anti-court forces went into high gear. After numerous legislative failures, Edwin Meese and other die-hard conservatives decided that the only way to radically change American law was by tilting the federal bench sharply to the right. They went at it systematically, focusing on the Supreme Court and intermediate appellate levels where federal law is made. Men (and an occasional woman) from the far right of the judicial spectrum were appointed en masse. Such well-known and not-so-well-known conservatives as Sandra Day O'Connor, Anthony Kennedy, Antonin Scalia, Clarence Thomas, Robert Bork, Richard Posner, and Kenneth Starr were appointed—without objection, in all but a few cases. (Two notable exceptions are Bork's and Thomas' appointments to the Supreme Court—though not their appointments to the circuit court.) Potential nominees were asked their views on abortion, school prayer, unions, and other controversial matters. Moderates like Republican Judith Whittaker, who made the mistake of supporting the Equal Rights Amendment; and Philip Lacovara, one of Washington's most distinguished attorneys who, though a Goldwater supporter, joined a lawyers' civil rights group, were vetoed. Independents like Deputy Solicitor General Andrew Frey, who had given $25 to a gun-control group, were also rejected.

The result was a transformation of the federal judiciary as 12 years of Reagan-Bush appointees put solid conservative majorities on almost all the federal courts. The only court that remained relatively free of conservative domination for much of this period was the Supreme Court, because Justice Lewis Powell—most of the time a conservative vote—not infrequently swung over to the liberal side on key issues like affirmative action. That came to an end with the arrival of Anthony Kennedy who, with a few notable exceptions, has consistently voted with the Rehnquist-Scalia-Thomas-O'Connor bloc.

Bill Clinton's victory in 1992 and a Democratic Senate gave liberal Democrats a chance to restore some balance to the federal courts. The Republicans, though in the minority in 1993-94, threatened to challenge nominees they considered too liberal. Clinton's response was to avoid nominating judges who could be labeled as clearly liberal. As a result, a recent study by three political scientists found that the Clinton judges are less liberal than President Jimmy Carter's and quite similar to those of President George Bush, except that there are more minorities and women among the Clinton group.

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Then came the Republican takeover of the Senate in 1994. Now, Clinton's judicial nominees and appointees alike find themselves under attack for their "liberal activism"—despite the fact that conservative activists like Clint Bolick have conceded that Clinton's nominees have been "moderate."

Hands Off the Courts

Truth be told, all judges are "activist." They have to be, particularly in constitutional cases. To last more than a few years, a constitution must be written in what Chief Justice John Marshall called "great outlines" that specify only "its important objects," outlines that must be filled in by judges. This is particularly true of our Constitution, written over 200 years ago by people whose vision was shaped by an America very different from the one in which we live today. After all, *Brown v. Board of Education* was one of the most "activist" decisions in our history. Would we have wanted it to come out differently?

Moreover, all constitutions and most statutes are the product of compromises, many of which are deliberately ambiguous in order to paper over differences that cannot be bridged, only bypassed. When these deliberately ambiguous texts come to the courts, the latter have no choice but to "make" the law.

Activism can, of course, go too far—though what is "too far" is often disputable and usually depends on who wins or loses. It is generally agreed that the pre-New Deal conservative judges were too aggressive, and these days a vociferous minority of our population believes that the *Roe v. Wade* court was as well. By and large, however, the system has managed to keep this activism within accepted limits. Many of the liberal activist "horrors" cited by DeLay et al., for example, were reversed by higher courts, rightly or wrongly. And if the mainstream of the nation believes the courts have gone too far, history shows that sooner or later the offending rulings will be modified or overruled.

The important thing is to maintain judicial independence. For that, we must try to keep the judiciary as free as possible from the partisanship to which it has recently been subjected. The House Judiciary Committee, for instance, has held hearings on a proposed constitutional amendment to eliminate the life tenure for federal judges that is the precondition for their independence. And Judge Robert Bork shocked even his allies with a proposal to allow a majority of either house of Congress to overrule federal or state court decisions.

Of course, some partisanship is inevitable, especially at the Supreme Court level. A conservative president can naturally be expected to nominate somewhat conservative judges, and vice-versa. What has kept the system running smoothly in the past has been the understanding that it is the president's prerogative to nominate any jurist he feels has the intellectual mettle to do the job well. And by and large, Democrats went along with the Reagan-Bush appointments (In fact, during Bush's final year in the White House, the Democrat-controlled Senate approved 66 judicial appointments.) In order for an ideological balance to be maintained in the courts, the Congress must respect the will of the people—as expressed through their elected president—where judicial appointments are concerned. That's the way the system is supposed to work. By trying to win the whole game, the Republicans are gumming up the works. It is they, in fact, and not the judges they are attacking, who are betraying our constitutional heritage "in order to advance their own political views." ●

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There is Hope After O.J.

D.C. Mayor Barry still tries to cover up his incompetence with cries of racism, but some black Washingtonians have finally had enough

BY NURITH C. AIZENMAN

IT'S A SWELTERING LATE-SUMMER DAY AND Sandra Seegers has already spent several hours trekking through Washington D.C.'s middle-class Crestwood neighborhood collecting signatures for her campaign to recall D.C. Mayor Marion Barry. Still, as she heads home, Seegers can't resist the opportunity to recruit one more foot soldier. Leaning out of her car window, Seegers calls over to a black man driving his three children up to a church. "What's going on over there today?"

"A fish fry," he answers conversationally.

They bat around favorite fish recipes for a few moments before Seegers gets to the point. "So, you wanna sign my petition to recall the mayor?"

"No," says the man, his smile fading.

"Why not?" Seegers demands.

"Because," he answers, "only white people don't like Barry."

"Well, am I white?" asks Seegers.

"Yes," he replies, driving off.

But she's not. Sandra Seegers not only looks African-American, but for nearly all of her 40-plus years, she has lived east of the Anacostia river in the poorest, most neglected part of Washington. Seegers' neighborhood comprises the city's eighth electoral ward, and it is the foundation upon which Barry has built his formidable popular following. For the last four months, however, this area has also served as the base from which Seegers has been leading an alliance of more than 200 volunteers bent on unseating Barry.

To appreciate how unprecedented—and felicitous—a development it is for a black woman from Ward 8 to be heading a recall attempt against Marion Barry, you need to understand just how deeply race has polarized and perverted the local politics of our nation's capital. This is a majority black city that until as recently as 1974 was effectively ruled by white Southern segregationists in Congress. And Barry, the second elected mayor and the first to align himself with the city's disenfranchised black underclass, was long ago anointed the living symbol of black Washington's struggle for political emancipation. Thanks to this status, Barry has managed to hold onto power through four elections—even as he amassed a record of mismanagement and corruption that would have spelled political death for any other leader in any other city. (This is, readers will recall, the town that re-elected Barry mayor in the very next election after he completed a prison sentence for smoking crack with his mistress at a downtown hotel.) Washington's generally liberal white voters, whose initial support for Barry faded years ago, express frustration and disbelief at the black community's continued devotion to him. After all, it is the blacks in Washington's poorer neighborhoods who have suffered the most at Barry's hand. They are the ones, for instance, who are most affected by the city's astounding rates of new AIDS infection, tuberculosis, and infant mortality—the highest in the nation. Yet until 1996, Barry's government failed to spend $89 million in federal grant money earmarked for solving those problems. But such evidence of Barry's incompetence is brushed aside by his black champions. Any failures on the mayor's part, they retort, are the result of a concerted effort by white racists to sabotage his administration in order to prove that blacks are incapable of self-government.

The black community's unwavering support has rendered Barry seemingly invincible. He won the last election with less than 10 percent of the vote in the city's white areas, and D.C.'s weekly *City Paper* has been referring to him as "Mayor-for-Life" for more than a decade. Thus the irony was rich this past August when everyone from Jesse Jackson to D.C. congressional delegate Eleanor Holmes Norton joined Barry in denouncing a $1 billion aid package from Congress as a "rape of

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democracy" and characterizing Sen. Lauch Faircloth, who had orchestrated the bailout, as a white Southerner plotting to "recolonize the citizens of the District." To be sure, Congress had exacted a heavy price for its largesse. Major mayoral prerogatives, such as the ability to hire and fire top local officials, have been taken from Barry and given to the unelected financial control board that Congress appointed to supervise D.C.'s budget back in 1995—when the city first began teetering on the edge of bankruptcy. But if a democracy is defined as a system in which leaders are held accountable to the people they serve, D.C. ceased to be one long before Congress and the control board stepped in.

Which is precisely what makes the latest movement to recall Barry such welcome news. True, their number is small, and they face an uphill battle, but at long last, some of the people who have been most harmed by Barry are exercising their constitutional right to try to 'throw the bum out.' In the process they are taking the first step toward re-establishing the basic formula of democratic government that—far more than an unaccountable control board—is the key to the city's salvation.

Doing the Right Thing

The effort to recall Barry originated not with Sandra Seegers, but with a group of D.C. cab drivers who were angry at Barry for supporting an overhaul of the city's taxi rules that they feared would force them out of business. Barry has since backed down, but at the time, the drivers felt betrayed because they had been at the forefront of Barry's last mayoral campaign—even providing his supporters with free transportation to the polls. Last May, the taxi drivers registered their recall drive with the D.C. board of elections. They were then given until October 28 to collect at least 33,475 signatures—10 percent of the city's registered voters—in favor of holding a recall. Their petition had to include the signatures of at least 10 percent of the voters in at least five of the city's eight wards. If the effort was successful, the city would hold an up-or-down vote on Barry. If he lost, a special election would be held, in which any D.C. resident, including Barry, would be free to compete.

Recognizing that they had a long road ahead of them, the drivers enlisted the help of Seegers, who had had prior experience with a similar campaign against former D.C. council member and Barry protégé Eydie Whittington. Seegers soon found herself in charge. "I was brought on as a consultant," she sighs. "Little did I know they just planned on getting it started and letting the citizens take over." To keep the ball rolling, Seegers has assembled a patchwork coalition that includes members of D.C.'s Green Party, the local Reform Party, and various other white folk. But it is the working- and middle-class blacks that Seegers has brought into the movement who are the most important. Without them the recall could easily be written off as just another racist crusade to unseat a powerful black leader. In fact it was for precisely this reason that back in 1989, the late homeless advocate Mitch Snyder, who was white, decided to abort a planned recall against Barry. This time around, blacks constitute two-thirds of the core group, so as Seegers puts it, "no one can say it's all white people." Most significantly, the black Washingtonians in Seegers' movement are in many ways representative of the people who have kept Barry in office in the first place. As a result, they provide a window onto both the source of his lasting strength, and the seeds of his possible demise.

It's mid-September, and the recall group has gathered about 22,000 signatures. Muriel Martins is endeavoring to add one more name to the list. A petite African-American with a gentle smile and a soft voice, Martins is standing in the parking lot of a Safeway supermarket in racially mixed, middle-class Ward 4, trying to coax a passerby into endorsing her petition. Unfortunately for Martins, the woman, who is also black, is far more enraged by Congress' imposition of the financial control board than the transgressions of Mayor Barry. "They took his power! How DARE they!" the woman rants.

Martins nods sympathetically. Although she is committed to removing Barry, she can relate to the woman's anger. Like many African-Americans who lived in D.C. during the '60s and early '70s, Martins views Barry as an embodiment of the civil rights struggle. Until the mid-'60s, Washington was largely ignored by the activists fighting for civil rights in places like Mississippi and Alabama. Thanks to the abundance of federal jobs in D.C., the city had a sizable black middle and upper class—and it was deemed too beholden to the white power structure to be worth trying to organize. Nevertheless, D.C. also had a large black underclass that was too poor and uneducated to benefit from the federal government's presence. Sensing a need—and an opportunity—for leadership, young Marion Barry, a civil rights activist from Mississippi, moved to D.C. to help galvanize that underclass. Just one year shy of a Ph.D. in chemistry, Barry was hardly a man of the street; but he quickly persuaded some of the local hoodlums to teach him how to talk the talk and walk the walk. Some of Barry's tactics during those early years raised eyebrows, most notably the way he threatened to picket local busi-

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nesses that didn't contribute money to his group, or the time he provoked the white police into arresting him so he could star in a police brutality case. But to Martins, then a teenager living with her mother and three brothers in a working-class neighborhood of Northeast D.C., Barry was a hero. "I remember him really fighting against the way the African-American man was being harassed." When Barry ran for mayor in 1978, Martins gladly gave him her vote.

Martins continued to admire Barry throughout his first three terms, largely because she still associated him with the spirit of idealism and self-reliance that animated her generation. "We knew we had to achieve against the odds," she remembers. "We'd sit up all night studying. We felt we had a responsibility to do well, to lift ourselves up." It was Barry, says Martins, who first gave her the idea of embarking on her current career. "I was at a workshop with him and I was asking a lot of questions, and he said, 'You know, I think you'd make a great teacher,'" she remembers. Today, Martins teaches American history at Dunbar High School. As a divorced mother of two, her financial circumstances are not much better than her own mother's were—in fact, Martins still lives just blocks away from the street on which she grew up. But getting rich was never her goal. Martins is simply proud to have pulled her family up to a new social and educational level. She's already put her older daughter through college and has the younger one enrolled in a pre-engineering program at Dunbar High. And Martins feels good to be making a difference in her community—after all, "that's what Mayor Barry used to advocate."

Meanwhile, Barry was practicing something altogether different from what he preached. When he first took office in 1979, Barry vowed to use his power to help improve the lives of Washington's black citizenry by dramatically increasing the number of minority-owned firms that were awarded city contracts. Of course, it was those minorities who happened to be buddies of the mayor who were the real beneficiaries. But as authors Harry Jaffe and Tom Sherwood note in their book *Dream City*, Barry's approach was theoretically no different from the patronage system employed by mayors elsewhere. Except for one detail. Other mayors have "demanded that the cronies do the work, provide the service, and complete the job. Barry rained contracts on his friends, asked little in return, and often looked the other way as they gouged millions of dollars in city funds without performing services." Naturally, it was the poor who suffered the most. For instance, after promising to renovate 3,000 units of public housing in 1979, Barry simply handed the contract over to a couple of pals who didn't bother to do the work. Six years later, 19 percent of the city's housing remained boarded up, as the list of families waiting for subsidized homes reached 11,000.

Still, thanks to the influx of cash that washed over D.C. during the real estate boom of the 1980s, major parts of the city were revitalized and new buildings started popping up all over town. So it wasn't until Barry was arrested for using crack that Muriel Martins began to question his actions. Even then, her first instinct was to support Barry. "I felt betrayed by him for placing himself in that situation," she explains, "but I also felt betrayed by my government for spending millions of dollars to arrest one man." The night after Barry was detained, Martins joined a candlelight vigil outside his home. "We prayed that whatever his problem was that he could get through it, and that his faith in God would not diminish. We were in tune with the Christian value of forgiving your brother."

Barry made the most of their indulgence. "I spent so much time caring about, and worrying about, and doing for others," he soberly explained to parishioners at a church service several days later, "I've not worried about or cared enough for myself." And Barry and his lawyers did their best to portray his arrest as a conspiracy by the white establishment. "Seven years ago the government made a determination that it would get Marion Barry," the mayor's lawyer told the jury at his trial, "and it would go to any lengths, any extremes to get him." Barry's explanation to police at the time of his arrest was even more succinct: "Goddamn bitch set me up."

By the time Barry had been released from prison and launched his re-election bid, Martins was in Estonia on a Fulbright teacher scholarship. Nonetheless, she made sure to obtain an absentee ballot and fill it out for Barry. "I really thought he was the better candidate."

It was the shock of what she discovered upon her return to Washington that finally turned Martins off. "When I came back, and saw that a control board had been put in place ... and I saw that he could no longer effectively lobby on the Hill, I said to myself, there's no sense in having him as mayor."

That's not to say Martins isn't still a Barry fan—in fact when she speaks of him she sounds more like a concerned family member than an outraged constituent. "I still love him as a brother. But I would like to see him retire, write a book, and get out of this political mess. The longer he stays in it the worse everything gets. What is he trying to prove that we don't already know? We obviously know that he can survive anything. The point is, can the citizens survive? We need someone who can inspire us—and

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lobby Congress. Barry's a man under siege. He's no longer effective. It's just time for him to go."

Low Expectations

Sandra Seegers' response to Barry's arrest was far less charitable than Martins'. That's because Seegers was never quite as taken with him in the first place. She was just a few years too young during the late '60s to be swept up in the spirit of that era. And by her mid-twenties, Washington was already a much darker place. In 1978, the year Barry was elected, one of Seegers' brothers was shot four times in the head in a drug-related murder. He died on Gayland Street, Southeast—not far from Frederick Douglass' old home. "He was the one I was closest to," she says softly.

But although, as Seegers puts it, "I've never seen Barry walk on water," until his arrest, she was disinclined to oppose him. "I kept hearing that he was on drugs, and I thought 'he probably is,' but I also figured he was still doing an okay job—he's making sure the city services get done."

Herein lies a second source of Barry's power. Despite the gross inefficiency of his government, upon coming to office, Barry made sure that Washington's poorest neighborhoods finally received basic services, like regular trash collection, street repair, and accurate water billing, that other areas of town had long taken for granted. In the process, he earned the undying gratitude of the mostly black residents of poorer wards like Seegers'.

Ironically, today the D.C. government has collapsed to such an extent that those services are no longer reliable in even the wealthiest parts of town. Yet the notion that Barry was the first—and the only—political leader to really care about them, has a powerful hold on lower-income blacks. Even Seegers, who was disgusted to hear that Barry had been arrested for smoking crack—"of all things, he had to do the 'nigger drug,'" she sighs—was willing to give him one last chance. In 1992, almost immediately after his release from prison, Barry jumped back into politics. The mayoral election was still two years off, but Ward 8's seat on the D.C. council was up for election in November, so he moved into the neighborhood and launched his campaign. Seegers signed up to help. "I thought, even though he's a criminal, he could still help Ward 8. He's experienced, he's got the contacts and the clout. And Ward 8 can only go up."

Barry donned a dashiki and took to the streets preaching the virtues of redemption and black pride. Voters turned out in record numbers, and he won the race by 3 to 1. But when he decided to throw his hat in the mayor's race just one year later, Seegers began to fear Barry was merely using his Ward 8 seat as a launching pad for a full political comeback. She urged him not to run and says she agreed to work on his campaign only reluctantly. Not long after Barry was inaugurated, Seegers soured on him for good.

It's NOT a Black Thing

As far as cab driver Vernon Humbles is concerned, Seegers could not have done so a moment sooner. "I'm just glad Sandra finally woke up," he says. Although he lives in the strongly pro-Barry Ward 7, Humbles represents a third, smaller group of working-class blacks—those who never liked Barry. Humbles' decades-long struggle to stay afloat as a cabbie and an ice cream truck driver has convinced him that "Barry doesn't give a damn about the little people." And he says he's never been seduced by Barry's claim that the fault lies with the white establishment. "I agree that the white man wants to see Barry fail, but he's assisting in his own demise," says Humbles. "And he's failing us, he's not failing the white community. They have private schools to go to, they have their own street cleaning crews, they don't have this murder problem." Humbles says it makes his blood boil when other African-Americans tell him not to "betray a brother." "If anyone is betraying the black community, it's Barry. And it's our responsibility to hold him accountable."

Not surprisingly, it didn't take much persuading to get Humbles to join the recall movement. But while the participation of Humbles and other blacks who hail from Barry strongholds is a momentous development, the challenge facing the recall campaign should not be underestimated. To get a sense of what Seegers and her fellow petitioners are up against, I accompany them to a community picnic that the D.C. Recreation Department (one of the few agencies still under Barry's control) holds one Saturday in a park adjacent to the mayor's house in Southeast Washington.

The ride there from downtown D.C. provides a preview of just how isolated this area is from the rest of the city. I hail a taxi and give the driver the address. He looks confused. "You want to go where?"

"It's near the corner of Martin Luther King and South Capitol Street," I offer.

"Oh, ma'am, that's not a good place to go," he says shaking his head. As we embark on the half-hour journey, it's hard to believe we are not leaving the city altogether. We cross over a wide bridge spanning the Anacostia river, and traverse a long stretch of open highway—a rarity in D.C., where most neighborhoods are connected by residential streets. Once in the heart of Southeast, the landscape is dominated by block upon

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block of dull-colored public housing complexes. The calm atmosphere outside belies the danger within. The bulk of the 400-odd homicides committed in D.C. each year occur here. This is the neighborhood that first embraced Barry upon his release from jail; it is the cocoon in which he began his metamorphosis from disgraced pol to Barry-the-Unbeatable.

Barry lives in a smallish mansion, minutes from Sandra Seegers' home. At the picnic next door the party is in full swing. An African musical troupe in native costume pounds out a steady drumbeat, and the smell of barbecued chicken wafts through the air. Seegers, decked out in a burgundy "RECALL Barry" T-shirt, is clearly in her element. She waves hello to friends from the neighborhood and stops to hug someone at every turn. The handful of whites in the group couldn't be more conspicuous if they were standing on stilts. They hardly bolster Seegers' effort to convince potential recruits that the recall is not a white-driven movement, but she says she wouldn't dream of leaving the whites at home. "They live in D.C. too," she says. "And if they can stand up to do the recall, I'll take them anywhere."

The recall folks aren't the only ones promoting a cause. Someone hands me a flyer protesting a recent proposal to build a new prison in the area. The No. 1 reason it lists for opposing the jail: "The citizens of Ward 8 should not be a party to a process that has systematically failed to rehabilitate our black men!" The threat of "diminished property values" barely makes it to the bottom of the list. Welcome to Barryland.

Suddenly a policeman grabs the "Recall Barry" sign being carried by one of the white members of Seegers' group. The man refuses to let go—pointing out that this is a federal park and he has every right to express his opinions. There is a brief scuffle as the policeman wrests away the sign. The crowd cheers wildly. "Get him out! Get him out! If he don't take you out, we will!" they scream. Among those shrieking the loudest is a woman in high heels and a lime-green lycra pantsuit who had earlier tried to knock the clipboard out of the hands of one of the other white petitioners. The woman in green turns out to be Florence Smith, a member of the local Advisory Neighborhood Commission and, as such, an elected official of the D.C. government. "I think it's very disrespectful for them to be walking around with a 'Remove Mr. Barry' sign in a park right by his house ... and I would like to see them hauled off," Smith explains after the uproar has subsided. "And you make sure you put that in your paper right. Anything else you put in the paper that ain't right, I have a Jew lawyer that will sue y'all."

Seegers and Co. are allowed to stay, but their sign remains locked inside a patrol car. Meanwhile, Barry has ventured out of his mansion to see what the commotion is about. "How many signatures you got?" he asks one of the petitioners.

"That's a state secret," she answers.

"Have you got 40,000?" he presses.

"We only need 34,000."

"You need 34,000 *certified* ones," Barry says smiling.

Barry Beware

He has a point. The validity of each signature must be confirmed by the D.C. elections board—and it doesn't take much to be disqualified. For instance, if a voter has failed to notify the board of a change of address, his signature is of no use—even though this mistake will not impede him from voting in the next election. This scenario presents a problem in poorer wards where people move frequently. And it was the main reason why Seegers' 1995 campaign to recall Eydie Whittington (Barry's hand-picked successor to his Ward 8 council seat) was unsuccessful. Despite collecting 1,100 more signatures than she needed, Seegers ultimately came up 700 short. Seegers says she doesn't want to get burned again, so she's concentrated the petitioners' activities in the better-off Wards 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6.

At first, her strategy seemed to be working. By the end of July, the group had collected 13,000 signatures—more than a third of the 33,475 they need. But things slowed in August, and the movement has had a hard time regaining momentum. As of mid October, two-and-a-half weeks before the deadline, the recall drive is stuck at 24,000 signatures and Seegers' optimism is fading. Not surprisingly, the recall has done well in the white bastion of Ward 3, attracting 1,000 more registered voters than the 10 percent required. But Seegers' group has just barely collected the minimum needed in racially mixed Wards 1 and 2; it is still 800 signatures short in Ward 6 and 3,000 short in Ward 4. Seegers is still hopeful about Ward 6, pointing out that her group is gathering about 700 signatures a week there. But she concedes that Ward 4 will probably prove to be the recall's Achilles heel: Although Seegers and the others continue to petition the ward every day, their efforts are only yielding about 75 signatures a week.

How could a movement that began so promisingly have taken such a disappointing turn? Two reasons stand out. First, Congress' decision this August to strip Barry of most of his remaining power caused many black Washingtonians to shift the focus of their anger from Barry to the Hill. These voters are now more interested in bashing Congress for usurping their demo-

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cratic rights than in protesting Barry's incompetence.

The second obstacle has been the local news media's apathy. You'd think a group that is gathering thousands of signatures against one of the nation's most controversial mayors would merit frequent progress reports. But apart from a few minor stories early on, D.C.'s TV stations and major newspapers have given the recall scant attention and offer little explanation for their indifference. The lack of media coverage has been particularly crippling to the recall because, compared to the white parts of town, D.C.'s black wards—even the middle-class ones—have fewer public gathering places, such as shopping centers and restaurant strips, where many people can be solicited at once. So in order to get the word out in black wards, petitioners have had to resort to the time-consuming and less effective door-to-door approach.

Still, local political analyst Mark Plotkin thinks Seegers must share some of the blame for the recall's slowdown. "This was something you could define—it needed some drama, some theater. ... Seegers has provided some energy," he explains, "but I don't think the group has the resources and the organizational skills to pull it off." And Plotkin worries that if they fail, the group will only confirm Barry's sense of invulnerability as he ponders another run in 1998.

But if that is the message Barry carries away from a failed recall attempt, he may be deluding himself. Seegers' last recall effort, against Whittington, proved to be, as she put it, "a delayed reaction." Though the recall itself was unsuccessful, Whittington's opponent beat her by 9 percentage points in the next election.

As for Barry, he has limited wiggle room. In 1994 he won by 56 percent—his lowest showing ever, made all the less impressive by the fact that his opponent was a white Republican in a town that is two-thirds black and over 90 percent Democrat. It was black voters like Muriel Martins and Sandra Seegers who saved Barry back then. And there is evidence that Martins and Seegers are not the only ones who've changed their minds since. In a May *Washington Post* poll, 50 percent of blacks voiced disapproval of Barry—up from 31 percent just a year earlier. What's more, over 70 percent of D.C.'s blacks—even those in Southeast—said he should not run again. And just because they're not rushing to sign recall petitions doesn't mean Barry shouldn't take them seriously. As Muriel Martins, so recently a Barry supporter herself, explains, "They feel like Barry's been hurt and ill. And our philosophy is, if a brother is down you do not injure him further. So they say, 'I won't sign your petition, and I'll let him finish his term of office; but I will not vote for him in 1998.'" ●

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You've Come a Long Way, Maybe

JonBenet, Diana, the princess fantasy, and what it has done to women

BY MICHELLE COTTLE

THERE I WAS, IN MY LOCAL BOOKstore, jockeying for position at the magazine racks with a dozen or so sharp-suited Hill staffers. Looking down, I noticed *Ms.* magazine's 25th anniversary issue. A giant "25 years" was splashed across the cover in hot-pink type, and the magazine's front flap boasted a long list of illustrious contributing writers, from Alice Walker to Bella Abzug to Gloria Steinem. I reached over to retrieve a copy, planning to spend the evening reveling in just how far my gender has come in the past few decades.

That's when I saw them: Yasmine Bleeth's breasts—larger than life, semi-clad in a black-lace teddy, and peering at me from the cover of *Details*. Snuggled up alongside the "Baywatch" beauty were two other prime-time mammas, equally voluptuous, equally unclad. In fact, upon closer examination I discovered that the photo was part of a three-page foldout featuring eight shapely TV actresses, nestled together in groups of twos and threes, hair tousled, lips parted, all sporting a variety of black panties, garters, bras, slips, and so on. The cover line: "The Girls that Make You Lose Remote Control."

Suddenly, I wasn't so sure we'd come very far at all.

The confusion isn't mine alone. Despite—or, more accurately, as a result of—feminist strides, women now face an endless series of important "life decisions." Today, we must figure out how to balance not only the roles of sex goddess and domestic goddess, but also of Supreme Court Justice or Wall Street banker. And as our options increase, so does the confusion. Do we want to be Cokie Roberts or Julia Roberts? Elizabeth Dole or Elizabeth Hurley? To any self-respecting '90s woman, the choice seems obvious—but it's not. Even with our high-powered careers and corner offices, we can still be tempted by what writer Marjorie Williams has dubbed "the seductions of dependence," the allure of being placed on a pedestal and taken care of by Prince Charming. And even as we decry being treated like sex objects and valued for our looks, girdles are making a comeback and beneath a surprising number of those Ann Taylor suits lurks a Wonderbra.

Perhaps for this reason, women more than men seem to search for glimpses of ourselves in public figures—movie stars, athletes, even those sad and sorry creatures on the afternoon talk shows. We strain to see how the central conflicts and questions in our lives are being played out in the lives of the famous and the infamous. Thus, Anita Hill becomes the champion of every woman who has felt powerless to alter a bad work situation, while Oprah's eternal battle of the bulge reassures us that even the rich and glamorous have their demons.

As the end of 1997 fast approaches, two females stand out as the year's undisputed headliners in the public—and particularly the feminine—imagination: JonBenet Ramsey and Diana, Princess of Wales. Save for both figures having achieved icon status, the two seemingly had little in common in life, and even less in death: a 6-year-old beauty queen found murdered in her parents' basement, the most famous woman in the world killed in a car chase through the streets of Paris. Yet both females represented an embrace of traditional definitions of femininity. Both had pursued, and to

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some extent achieved, the Once-upon-a-time fantasy of becoming a beautiful fairy princess; both were celebrated for and heavily defined by their physical beauty and charm. And both, despite JonBenet's youth, embodied the dual nature of Woman as The Virgin and The Whore, that nebulous combination of innocence and sexuality that has long titillated Man. (Note that inside the aforementioned *Details* was another photo spread of the eight women, this time garbed all in white lingerie. Don't think the symbolism was lost on the editors.) To some extent, JonBenet and Diana stood for everything that feminism has been fighting against for the last 30 years. They served as a reminder that such unfashionably "unliberated" values still hold sway in the lives of countless girls and women.

Daddy's Little Princess

Even had she not been murdered, JonBenet Ramsey might still have become a household name. She was, after all, in training to be a star. Born into a family of beautiful, charming Southern belles (her mother had made it all the way to the Miss America contest), JonBenet was, by age six, a veteran on the kiddie pageant circuit. The precocious tot's combination of looks and charm had already won her the crown of Little Miss Colorado, along with a host of lesser-known titles. Like other mini beauty queens before her, JonBenet might have ridden the pageant wave to a career in child modeling or acting.

But JonBenet's "might haves" ended in the predawn hours of December 26, 1996. Not long after parents Patsy and John Ramsey phoned police to report both their daughter missing and their discovery of a note demanding $118,000 for her safe return, JonBenet's crumpled body was found in a hidden corner of the basement in her family's Boulder, Co., home. The grisly details of the murder were guaranteed to make the national news: The child's tiny skull was fractured; she had duct tape across her mouth and a homemade garrote around her throat; and, most shockingly, her body bore signs of possible sexual assault. Soon everyone from Geraldo to *The New York Times* was looking into "the JonBenet story." As the media tsunami gained speed, critics carped that the crime would not have received such attention had the little victim been poor or black. True. But what really made JonBenet an object of irresistible, morbid fascination for the American public were those photographs.

As with most high-profile murders, photos of the victim in happier days soon began appearing in the papers and on television. In JonBenet's case, however, the pictures came not from the family album but from the deceased's pageant portfolio, professional glossies showing the petite six-year-old dolled up to look twice her age. The heavy make-up, the teased mane of blond hair (no, it was not naturally that color), the too adult clothes and too flirtatious looks provoked a visceral reaction in the viewing public. Parents and non-parents alike were both repelled and obsessed by the frozen, coy smiles of the baby beauty. The possible sexual aspect of JonBenet's death melded with the sexualized photos from her life, making us all a bit queasy. With images of the heavily mascaraed child lodged in the public mind, rumblings that the parents might have been involved in the murder became decidedly more plausible. Regardless of whether the Ramseys did or did not strangle their own daughter, there was something creepy going on in that household.

As the ripples spread, JonBenet's story thrust the entire world of child beauty pageants into the public consciousness. The public promptly declared itself sickened, shocked, and outraged. News articles made repeated reference to the "strange" and "bizarre" world of JonBenet, as if the littlest Ramsey had been part of some dark underground community. (The phrase "kiddie porn" surfaced more than once.)

Far from a fringe community, however, the U.S. pageant circuit attracts hundreds of thousands of preteen participants each year. (Now seems the appropriate time to disclose that, at age seven, I myself donned a frilly frock and patent leather shoes to take part in the Little Miss Dothan (Ala.) contest. I lost.) But whatever peripheral attributes the various pageants measure, a girl's physical beauty remains of central importance. In a society of fluid gender roles, pageants stand as the purest remaining forum for judging traditional femininity: Good old-fashioned qualities such as charm, poise, and beauty are what count.

You don't have to be a rabid feminist to understand the downside of encouraging females—of any age—to view nice teeth and glossy hair as indicative of a person's worth. Most '90s women are uncomfortable that such rituals still take place. But despite the disdain with which so much of our society views these contests, they are in fact *gaining* popularity. Over the last decade, the number of national pageants alone (those with contestants from multiple states) has grown from around 150 to more than 270, according to the pageant industry association, EPIC International. It seems that, although we may talk a good talk about social progress, we still want our little girls honored as "the fairest of them all." (A metaphor for

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this ambivalence can be seen in the recent behavior of the long-running Miss America contest. A mere two years ago, the pageant gave a half-hearted nod to feminism by having viewers vote on whether or not to keep the event's swimsuit competition. Not only did the "Ayes" overwhelmingly have it, but this year organizers decided it was in the show's best interest to allow bikinis as well as one-piece suits. Ratings jumped 11 percent over last year's show, and contestants who chose to bare the extra flesh did proportionally better than those who kept it covered.)

Upon hearing of Princess JonBenet's grisly end, many women breathed a sigh of resignation (if not relief), thinking that of course this is what happens when little girls are turned into Barbie dolls and taught to prance about in front of strangers. To paraphrase Shakespeare, "These tawdry delights have tawdry ends." But the story isn't really over. Little JonBenet was buried wearing a pageant costume and one of her rhinestone tiaras, but the dream of being a storybook princess lives on. In fact, notes EPIC President Mike Maki, in the wake of the murder, the number of calls his organization typically receives from aspiring contestants and parents seeking pageant information actually doubled. And whatever message JonBenet supposedly sent about the objectification of women, this year an estimated 3 million American femmes fatales will put on their prettiest dresses and winningest smiles and glide across a pageant stage to be judged on their style, their grace, and the curve of their hips.

The People's Princess

Unlike the United States, Britain has a titled aristocracy, and little girls of the right breeding can grow up to be real princesses. Lady Diana Spencer did not have to win a slew of beauty pageants to acquire her title; she merely had to catch the eye of the crown prince of England. (Or, to be more precise, the eye of the prince's mum.) The basic qualifications for the honor, however, were much the same: charm, poise, grace, beauty. And ultimately, Diana's fairy tale ended no less tragically than JonBenet's.

Saturday August 31, 1997, will most likely go down as this generation's version of the Kennedy assassination: Where were you when you heard the news? The subsequent media coverage of Princess Diana's death was unprecedented. I read most of the major print stories: the accounts in *The Washington Post* and *The New York Times*; the initial, commemorative, and follow-up issues of *Time* and *Newsweek*; even the self-conscious tribute by *The New Yorker*, with its high-brow essays and oh-so-clever headlines such as, "What Women Talk About When They Talk About Princess Diana." In the end, no one could—and most likely no one ever will—explain the Diana phenomenon. The pieces of the puzzle are laid out for all to examine: She was beautiful, glamorous, rich, royalty, a Celebrity. But the parts don't quite add up to the estimated 2 billion television viewers who bore witness to her funeral or the 10,000 tons of flowers placed at the gates of the royal palaces by puffy-eyed mourners.

Perhaps equally unprecedented was the striking difference in men's and women's reactions to the news—and subsequent news coverage—of the death of a public figure. Across the U.S., women programmed their VCRs to capture the funeral proceedings; the truly devoted set their alarm clocks to be present for live coverage of the dawn event. (As one female colleague put it, "I was there for the wedding, and I'll be there for the funeral.") Men, for the most part, seemed content to read the accounts in the morning papers or channel surf in search of a replay of Earl Spencer's vitriolic eulogy. Domestic squabbles broke out all over Washington—and most likely all over the nation—about the "appropriateness" of the media circus surrounding Diana's death, and of her fame in general. After all, noted our husbands, father, brothers, boyfriends, she didn't really *achieve* anything in her 36 years, other than wed the man who, at the time and for god only knows what reason, was considered the most eligible bachelor in the world. The vulgar display over her death ("They keep interrupting the U.S. Open for *updates* on it!" squawked an indignant male friend) was simply proof of how the Cult of Celebrity had ruined society's values, glorifying those who don't truly deserve our respect and admiration.

Even from women who consider themselves above celebrity gawking, this display of male obtuseness prompted a flood of rebuttals, featuring laundry lists of Diana's good deeds: her work with AIDS patients and sick children, her campaign against land mines, her willingness to reach out to those in pain or in need. But although the Princess of Wales used her star power to a better end than most, it's true she was no Mother Teresa. Even as Diana sought to help others, she also sought the spotlight. Only a month before her death, *Newsweek* reported on Diana's visit with the Fayed family in St. Tropez, where, "behaving like a woman scorned," the princess was trying to "upstage" Charles and Camilla, "frolicking for photographers in a bathing suit that showed off ... a breathtaking cleavage." Though a concerned visitor to the sick and the poor in places such as Bosnia, India, and Angola, Diana was a permanent resident of

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Celebrityland—perhaps its central figure in recent years. (Just how absurdly shallow this world can be was illuminated in a Diana tribute penned by *New Yorker* editor Tina Brown. "When the news came of her death, my first thoughts were ... of the wrongness of any royal princess, even a divorced one, contriving to be in that place at that time," wrote Brown. "In the late summer, the Paris of the rich and the titled simply closes down. ... Paris in August? Dinner at the Ritz weeks before *la rentreé*? The fact that she was there at all was discordant, a poignant symbol of a season of panic and flight." How sad. This grisly tragedy could have been averted, it seems, if Diana and Dodi had only remembered themselves and summered in Tuscany.)

Still, people's good works are always overstated in the wake of their demise (Have we already forgotten the flood of tears and tributes that characterized Nixon's memorial service?), and the debate over Diana's accomplishments overlooks a basic distinction: The displays of grief over her death were not so much about respect as about love. Rational or not, Diana was a public figure whom millions of women loved, both because of the dream that she had originally represented and later because of the disappointing realities they had seen her survive.

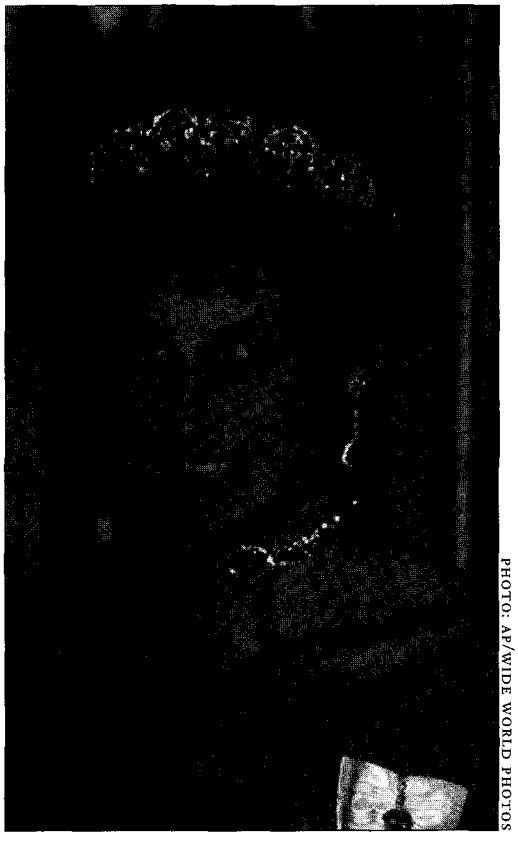

PHOTO: AP/WIDE WORLD PHOTOS

Starting out, Diana was the fairy tale come to life—Sleeping Beauty, Cinderella, and Snow White all rolled into one. The myth of the fairy princess still exerts a bizarre hold on the female psyche, and little girls aren't the only ones who still secretly believe that some day their prince will come. What is the female fascination with beauty queens, romance novels, and queen-for-a-day bridal fantasies if not a manifestation of some dark desire to be swept off our feet by a handsome prince? And feminist piety aside, for women struggling to brush away what remains of the glass ceiling or for single moms struggling just to make ends meet, guilty longings for life on a pedestal become understandable, if not particularly admirable. As the future queen of England, Diana was expected only to be pretty, gracious, and fertile. (The royal couple, whatever its failures, did expeditiously produce the requisite heir and a spare.)

Of course, the dark side of the fairy tale soon appeared on screen. The prince turned back into a frog, hopping into the sack with other frogettes and offering little emotional support to a young wife trying to learn the ropes of royalty. Languishing in a loveless marriage, burdened by rigid protocol and constant public scrutiny, Diana fell ill, grew severely depressed, even attempted suicide. Moreover, the innocent young woman who had come to her marriage bed a virgin—a non-negotiable requirement for princesses—soon followed her husband's lead and began taking outside lovers, much to the delight of the press.

Rather than abandon the princess for destroying the fairy tale for them, however, women became even more attracted to her. Every heartbreak that befell Diana only made the female public feel more connected with her. When her bulimia made the headlines (at a time when eating disorders were big news in the United States) it only proved that the princess suffered our same insecurities. Her desperate search for herself through New Age gurus, psychotherapists, and astrologers reassured us that even the world's most glamorous woman wasn't comfortable with who she was. When her marriage began to crumble, that clinched it: Diana was "one of us." Not even the tabloid sex scandals and tell-all books could sully her image; she was proclaimed "an icon of sexy saintliness" in a 1993 piece in *The New Republic*.

Whatever our sympathy for the suffering princess, many women were secretly relieved that the storybook castle turned out to be the cage we had suspected all along. And as Diana emerged from her divorce, the public watched—albeit with varying degrees of interest—to see her again transformed,

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this time not from lady to princess but from princess into independent woman. Here at last was a new chapter to the fairy tale—one with which modern women were more comfortable. The princess had grown up, found the courage to break out of her gilded cage, and was, as *People* magazine gushed upon naming Diana one of the 25 most intriguing people of 1996, "ready, it seems, for Act Two."

Sadly, act two never really got started, and Diana never quite made it to her independence day. Escaping the cage, she remained trapped in the fishbowl of her fame. And having dismissed her own security force, Diana quickly found herself dependent on her new beau's bodyguards, chauffeurs, and personal planes for any degree of privacy. As *Time* noted, "On the night of her death, Diana was entirely in the safekeeping of the Fayeds." A tragically misplaced trust, as it turns out. Whether, in her relationship with Dodi, Diana would have achieved real independence or simply given her self over to the safekeeping of another flawed prince is now a moot point. For the millions of women who followed the princess's every move, and for the millions more who only snuck the occasional peek at her progress, the fairy tale has ended.

In the wake of JonBenet's murder, the number of calls the pageant industry association received from aspiring contestants and parents doubled.

Storming the Castle

So where does "the fair sex" go from here? Should we throw out our eyeliner and pledge to commit our lives to the destruction of every existing copy of Cinderella? Of course not. There is nothing wrong with wanting to be beautiful or charming or sexy or glamorous. But our gender has labored too long for the right to also be seen as something more. When we slip into the role of—or simply allow ourselves to be treated as—pretty objects or coquettish children or dependent damsels, we undermine the "relationship of equals" that we claim to desire. In any relationship, of course, there will be times when one partner must lean more heavily on the other. (In families with young children, for instance, one parent may stay home during the tots' formative years, and thus be financially dependent on his—or more often her—spouse.) But the idea that one gender needs or deserves to be "taken care of" more than another is unhealthy. Granted, not all princesses fall off the pedestal so tragically, and being protected from life's unpleasantness has its appeal. But the cost of being up there is your equality and your independence.

What is particularly sad about JonBenet's and Diana's stories—aside from their premature endings—isn't that the two heroines chose an "unenlightened" path; it's that neither seemed to understand that she had a choice to make. JonBenet was turned into a fashion plate before she could even dress herself. Diana was born to a world of traditions and social etiquette that was only too happy to send her off to the castle tower, and that never really prepared her for life on her own. Whatever personal lessons women take from their stories, JonBenet and Diana should make us appreciate all of the confusing, frustrating choices we encounter in our lives.

But even as the most liberated among us pat ourselves on the back over the path not taken, we need to acknowledge and address the mixed signals society is still sending our gender. We obsess over the subliminal effects of rap music and video games on our young men, but no one in Congress is agitating for labels warning against the unhealthy values Kate Moss and *Cosmo* may be teaching our young women. It is the responsibility of women who, for the most part, have escaped the lure of the castle to balance the lessons girls learn from the fairy tales and romance novels and beauty pageants and fashion magazines. Political involvement is, of course, vital to women's independence and equality. But another key to the equation may be as simple as making sure that for every dress we buy our little girls, we also give them a great pair of sneakers; Santa should be encouraged to peddle fewer Pretty Pretty Princess games and more doctor's kits; Sleeping Beauty should be shelved in favor of Robin Hood or Heidi; and every time someone tells our little girls how beautiful they are, we should take care to praise them for also being smart or talented or funny or independent or brave. The goal shouldn't be to stop girls and women from dreaming of becoming princesses—we just need to change the job description. ●

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From the Eye of the Storm

The key moments of the Cuban missile crisis—as seen by a man who was in the thick of it

BY THEODORE C. SORENSEN

EVER SINCE JOHN F. KENNEDY AND Nikita Khrushchev peacefully resolved the world's first nuclear confrontation, a veritable cottage industry has focused on the Soviet Union's surreptitious installation of strategic missiles in Cuba and their rapid withdrawal. With thousands of books, articles, documentaries, seminars, and conferences devoted to those 13 harrowing days in October 1962, it seemed to me highly unlikely that new light could be shed on this subject.

I was wrong.

Harvard's Ernest May and Philip Zelikow have masterfully assembled, edited, and placed in context readable transcriptions of Kennedy's secret taping (unbeknownst to us all) of "ExComm's" marathon deliberations. Some key documents, external developments, and exchanges conducted outside the Cabinet Room or in Kennedy's absence are necessarily incorporated, if at all, only by reference. Some minor errors accompanied the transcription of these rudimentary tapes. But no previous work has conveyed more clearly the sometimes chilling, sometimes heated, sometimes foggy atmosphere in that room during the Cold War's most dangerous fortnight.

From recent Russian publications, we know now with certainty what some in our group doubted then: that the massive air strike and invasion of Cuba that they preferred to President Kennedy's decision to respond initially with a naval blockade (which Kennedy coupled with surveillance, warnings, and diplomatic pressure), would have engendered a vigorous Soviet nuclear as well as conventional force attack that would have escalated quickly into global war. In retrospect, Kennedy's choice seems obvious. Yet the transcripts reveal as never before that his choice was neither obvious nor easy.

In our first meeting on Tuesday, October 16, the discussion following the opening presentation of U-2 photographs of these incipient missile bases centered on their removal by surprise attack:

Secretary of State Dean Rusk: ... We have to set in motion a chain of events that will eliminate this base. I don't think we can sit still. The question becomes whether we do it by sudden, unannounced strike of some sort or ... build up the crisis to the point where the other side has to consider very seriously about giving in. ... We ourselves are not moved to general war. We're simply doing what we said we would do if they took certain action. Or we're going to decide that this is the time to eliminate the Cuban problem by actually eliminating the island.

Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara: ... If we are to conduct an air strike against these installations, or against any part of Cuba, we must ... schedule that prior to the time these missile sites become operational. ... Any air strike must be directed not solely

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THEODORE C. SORENSEN *was a member of President Kennedy's Executive Committee of the National Security Council. Book excerpts adapted from* The Kennedy Tapes: Inside the White House During the Cuban Missile Crisis, *published by the Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.* *Copyright © 1997 by the President and Fellows of Harvard College. Reprinted by permission.*

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against the missile sites, but against the missile sites plus the airfields, plus the aircraft which may not be on the airfields but hidden by that time, plus all potential nuclear storage sites. ... We would be prepared, following the air strike, for an invasion both by air and by sea. ...

Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Maxwell Taylor: We're impressed, Mr. President, with the great importance of getting a strike with all the benefit of surprise, which would mean ideally that we would have all the missiles that are in Cuba above ground.

Rusk: ... I don't believe, myself, that the critical question is whether you get a particular missile before it goes off, because if they shoot those missiles we are in general nuclear war. ...

Secretary of Treasury Douglas Dillon: ... I think that the chance of getting through this thing without a Russian reaction is greater under a quick strike than building the whole thing up to a climax. ...

National Security Adviser McGeorge Bundy: I share the Secretary of the Treasury's feeling. ...

President Kennedy: How effective can the take-out be, do they think?

Taylor: It'll never be 100 percent, Mr. President, we know. We hope to take out a vast majority in the first strike, but this is not just ... one strike, one day—but continuous air attack for whenever necessary, whenever we discover a target. ... I think we should be in a position to invade at any time, if we so desired.

Vice President Lyndon B. Johnson: ... I think the question with the base is whether we take it out or whether we talk about it, and either alternative is a very distressing one. But, of the two, I would take it out. Assuming that the commanders felt that way. ...

President Kennedy: What you're really talking about are two or three different potential operations. One is the strike just on these ... bases. The second is the broader one ... on the airfields and on the SAM sites and on anything else connected with missiles. Third is doing both of those things and also, at the same time, launching a blockade ... which is a larger step. And then, as I take it, the fourth question is the degree of consultation. I don't know how much use consulting with the British has been. They'll just object. [We] just have to decide to do it. Probably ought to tell them, though, the night before.

Attorney General Robert Kennedy: We have the fifth one, really, which is the invasion ... you're dropping bombs all over Cuba if you do the second. ... You're going to kill an awful lot of people, and we're going to take an awful lot of heat on it. ... You're going to announce the reason that you're doing it is because they're sending in these kinds of missiles. Well, I would think it's almost incumbent upon the Russians then, to say, "Well, we're going to send them in again."

McNamara: Sometime today, I think at the State Department, we will want to consider that. There's a real possibility you'd have to invade to reintroduce order into the country. And we would be prepared to do that.

Rusk: ... If there were a complete air strike against all air forces, you might as well do it. Do the whole job.

President Kennedy: ... We can't wait two weeks while we're getting ready to roll. Maybe we just have to take them out, and continue our other preparations ... Because that's what we're going to do anyway. We're going to do number one. We're going to take out these missiles.

Later in the week United Nations Ambassador Adlai Stevenson and former Secretary of State Dean Acheson agreed. In Stevenson's handwritten words (unfortunately contradicted in his next paragraph): "If they won't remove the missiles and restore the status quo ante, we will have to do it ourselves."

By Friday morning, however, under JFK's prodding questions, a consensus—led by McNamara, Rusk, and RFK—began moving our group away from air strike and invasion as a first step in favor of a blockade that would leave the next move up to Khrushchev. But not the Joint Chiefs of Staff, meeting privately with the president:

Chairman Taylor: ... From the outset we were united on the military requirement: ... First attack with the benefit of surprise those missiles and offensive weapons that we know about. ...

President Kennedy: Let me just say a little, first, about what the problem is, from my point of view. ... If we go in and take them out on a quick air strike ... we increase the chance greatly ... [of] their just going in and

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taking Berlin by force. Which leaves me only one alternative, which is to fire nuclear weapons—which is a hell of an alternative—and begin a nuclear exchange. ... So I don't think we've got any satisfactory alternatives. ... On the other hand, we've got to do something.

Taylor: We recognize all these things, Mr. President. But I think we'd all be unanimous in saying that really our strength in Berlin, our strength anyplace in the world, is the credibility of our response under certain conditions. And if we don't respond here in Cuba, we think the credibility is sacrificed.

President Kennedy: That's right. That's right. So that's why we've got to respond. Now the question is: What is our response?

Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Curtis LeMay: Well, I certainly agree with everything General Taylor has said. I'd emphasize, a little strongly perhaps, that we don't have any choice except direct military action. If we do this blockade that's proposed, a political action, the first thing that's going to happen is your missiles are going to disappear into the woods. ... I don't share your view that if we knock off Cuba, they're going to knock off Berlin. We've got the Berlin problem staring us in the face anyway. If we don't do anything to Cuba, then they're going to push on Berlin and push real hard because they've got us on the run. ... This blockade and political action, I see leading into war. This is almost as bad as the appeasement at Munich. ... I just don't see any other solution except direct military intervention right now. ...

Naval Chief of Operations Adm. George Anderson: ... The blockade will not affect the equipment that is already in Cuba, and will provide the Russians in Cuba time to assemble all of these missiles, to assemble the IL-28s, to get the MiGs ready to go. And I feel that, as this goes on ... this will escalate and then we will be required to take other military action at greater disadvantage to the United States. ...

President Kennedy: ... They can't let us just take out their missiles, kill a lot of Russians and not do anything. It's quite obvious that what they think they can do is try to get Berlin. That may be a risk we have to take, but—

LeMay: Well, history has been, I think, the other way, Mr. President. Where we have taken a strong stand they have backed off.

Army Chief of Staff Gen. Earl Wheeler: Mr. President, in my judgment, from a military point of view, the lowest-risk course of action ... is to go ahead with a surprise air strike, the blockade, and an invasion, because these series of actions progressively will give us increasing assurance that we really have gone after the offensive capability of the Cuban/Soviets corner. Now, admittedly, we can never be absolutely sure until and unless we actually occupy the island. ...

Marine Commandant Gen. David Shoup: ... If there is a requirement to eliminate this threat of damage, then it's going to take some forces, sizable forces, to do it. And as we wait and wait and wait, then it will take greater forces to do it. ...

"A blockade and political talk would be considered a pretty weak response. You're in a pretty bad fix, Mr. President."

LeMay: ... We (you) made pretty strong statements ... that we would take action against offensive weapons. I think that a blockade, and political talk, would be considered by a lot of our friends and neutrals as being a pretty weak response to this. And I'm sure a lot of our own citizens would feel that way, too. You're in a pretty bad fix, Mr. President.

President Kennedy: What did you say?

LeMay: You're in a pretty bad fix.

[Kennedy makes an unclear, joking reply.]

President Kennedy: I appreciate your views. These are unsatisfactory alternatives. The obvious argument for the blockade was [that] what we want to do is to avoid, if we can, nuclear war by escalation or imbalance.

The president soon after departed but—accidentally or intentionally—left the tape recorder on.

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Shoup: You pulled the rug right out from under him. Goddamn.

LeMay: Jesus Christ. What the hell do you mean? [Unclear.]

Shoup: I agree with that answer, agree a hundred percent, a hundred percent. He [President Kennedy] finally got around to the word "escalation." That's the only goddamn thing that's in the whole trick. Go in [unclear] and get every goddamn one. Somebody's got to keep them from doing the goddamn thing piecemeal. That's our problem. Go in there and friggin' around with the missiles. You're screwed. Go in there and friggin' around with the [air] lift. You're screwed. You're screwed, screwed, screwed. Some goddamn thing, some way, that they either do the son of a bitch and do it right, and quit friggin' around.

The following day, despite strong support for the chiefs' position from some of the ablest members of our group, JFK selected the blockade/surveillance/diplomatic warnings route. When Taylor reported this to the chiefs, after assuring the president that they would all loyally support his position, General Wheeler remarked: "I never thought I'd live to see the day when I would want to go to war."

The leaders of Congress, whom the president, Rusk, and McNamara briefed just prior to his Monday evening, October 22 televised address to the country and world, voiced sentiments similar to those of the Joint Chiefs:

Chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee Richard Russell: It seems to me that we are at a crossroads. We're either a first-class power or we're not. You have warned these people time and again, in the most eloquent speeches I have read since Woodrow Wilson, what would happen if there was an offensive capability created in Cuba. They can't say they're not on notice. The Secretary of State says: "Give them time to pause and think." They'll use that time to ... get better prepared. ... You have told them not to do this thing. They've done it. And I think that we should assemble as speedily as possible an adequate force and clean out that situation. ... I don't know whether Khrushchev will launch a nuclear war over Cuba or not. I don't believe he will. But I think that the more we temporize, the more surely he is to convince himself that we are afraid to make any real movement and to really fight. ... I hope you forgive me, but you asked for opinion—

President Kennedy: No, I did ask for opinions. But it's a very difficult problem that we're faced with. ...

Russell: Oh, my God, I know that. A war, our destiny, will hinge on it. But it's coming someday, Mr. President. Will it ever be under more auspicious circumstances? ...

Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman J. William Fulbright: ... I think a blockade is the worst of the alternatives. It seems to me that it complicates the whole thing.

President Kennedy: What are you in favor of, Bill?

Fulbright: I'm in favor, on the basis of this information, of an invasion, and an all-out one, and as quickly as possible. ... I would do nothing until you're ready to invade. A blockade leads into quibbling and delays among our own people, and especially the probability, certainty, of a confrontation with Russia itself. It will give them a better excuse for retaliation than our attack on Cuba. ...

President Kennedy: ... Now, when you talk about the invasion ... excluding the risk that these missiles will be fired ... I think that it would be foolish to expect that the Russians would not regard that as a far more direct thrust. ... And I think that the inevitable end result will be the seizure of Berlin. Now, as I say, we may have to [end] up with all that. ... But, I think if we're talking about nuclear war, the escalation ought to be at least with some degree of control. ... Stopping Russian ships—I know that's offensive to the Russians. [But] when you start talking about the invasion it's infinitely more offensive.

Fulbright: But not to the Russians, it seems to me. ...

House Armed Services Committee Chairman Carl Vinson: Don't you think, when the time comes, that you should strike with all the force and power and try to get it over with as quickly as possible, instead of prolonging it? ...

President Kennedy: ... Before we reach the point where we are physically able to [invade], we are going to take this action. ... It provides for the beginning of an escalation. I don't know where Khrushchev wants to take us. ... The people who are best-off are the people whose advice is not taken because whatever we do is filled with hazards. ... I just think at least we start here, then we see where we go. ... I better go and make this speech. ...

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He made the speech (after conveying to me some resentment over the congressional second-guessing), and he stuck to his determination that this country's initial course should be sufficiently prudent and limited to give Khrushchev time to consider his options.

By Saturday evening, however, that course looked unpromising. The missile bases were still there, largely completed and ready to fire. More Soviet supply ships headed for our naval "quarantine" line, accompanied by submarines. A U-2 photo reconnaissance plane was shot down by a Soviet surface-to-air missile, killing the pilot. Our low-level surveillance planes were fired upon. Two conflicting letters had been received from Khrushchev. While our reply to the first had interpreted its somewhat meandering message in positive terms, none of us saw hope for early success. Vice President Johnson, reflecting the frustrations of the now-resurgent air strike-invasion advocates, warned us that, in the absence of stronger action achieving results, both public and congressional opinion were turning against the president:

Johnson: ... They want to know what we're doing. There's a great feeling of insecurity. They're going to be saying: "I told you so." Tomorrow or the next day.

But the next day Khrushchev accepted the terms restated in the president's letter and announced the withdrawal of the missiles. John F. Kennedy, by his judicious selection and combination of available options and instruments of power, and by his rejection of a faster, more explosive response, had successfully avoided the shoals of both war and weakness. Through unprecedented pressures I would never wish to relive, his steady leadership had kept our ship on course.

Don't take my word for it. Read the book. ●

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Apocalypse Ahead

Everyone's talking about the film "The Peacemaker"—but when it comes to nuclear terrorism, truth is scarier than fiction

BY JOHN LEIFER

THIS FALL'S BLOCKBUSTER MOVIE "The Peacemaker" pits actors Nicole Kidman and George Clooney against a Bosnian terrorist headed for New York City with a grudge against the West and a backpack full of nukes. The duo's desperate attempts to prevent the bomb-toting villain from pulverizing the Big Apple make for an over-the-top, nail-biting thriller. But although Hollywood has taken its usual artistic license with the film, "The Peacemakers"'s central premise is less implausible than viewers may suspect—and far more possible than government experts and scientists want the public to know.

"I could build a fifteen-kiloton bomb in my kitchen—certainly powerful enough to kill a million people in the middle of Manhattan," says Ted Taylor, one of the chief weapons designers at the Los Alamos National Laboratories during the days when it was still the primary design facility for U.S. nuclear weapons. Taylor is now a professor at Princeton, and like many who've worked in the nuclear field, he's gravely concerned about the prospects of a real-life Peacemaker scenario.

A decade after the collapse of the Berlin Wall and the progressive dismantling of the Soviet military-industrial complex, Americans bask in the belief that the specter of nuclear destruction is but a vanquished demon, an anachronistic menace that no longer has a place in a post-Cold War world. But although the odds of a strategic nuclear attack may have disappeared along with the former Soviet Union, the possibility that a rogue state or terrorist organization will use weapons of mass destruction in some unconscionable act has, if anything, increased. The growing threat, say physicists, congressmembers, and members of the intelligence community, is the result of the convergence of four key developments: the proliferation of knowledge about how to construct such weapons, the increasing amount of fissile material, the deterioration of the security systems protecting that material, and the changing face of international terrorism.

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You Don't Have to Be a Rocket Scientist

Twenty years ago, a writer named Howard Morland made headlines by publicly unveiling his design for a homemade thermonuclear bomb. Predicated on information gleaned from sources ranging from the *Encyclopedia Americana* to a host of declassified documents, Morland's 270-pound device bore little resemblance to government photos depicting hydrogen bombs as 20-foot long, 20-ton behemoths. Morland's point in developing the schematic was to heighten awareness of the proliferation of potentially dangerous information, and to debunk the belief that weapons of mass destruction were impossibly difficult to either construct or transport. The viability of his amateur schematic—and the validity of his assertions—was made evident when the U.S. government unsuccessfully sued to prevent its publication. (The design eventually ran in the November 1979 issue of *The Progressive*.)

Morland's schematic was more conceptual than tactical—precise details were missing—leading some skeptics, including a group of scientists assembled by the Nuclear Control Institute (NCI), to assert that a layman still lacks sufficient information to build a bomb. "The detailed design drawings and specifications that are essential before it is possible to plan the fabrication of actual parts are not available," the group pointed out. Furthermore, "the preparation of these drawings requires a large number of man-hours and the direct participation of individuals thoroughly

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informed [about] ... the physical, chemical, and metallurgical properties of various materials to be used, as well as the characteristics affecting their fabrication."

But cut through the scientific mumbo-jumbo, and one finds that such knowledge is a lot easier to obtain than these scientists care to admit. For instance, a key piece of information that would-be nuke builders might require relates to the critical mass of fissile material needed to induce fission under select circumstances. Now granted, this is not the type of technical calculation your run-of-the-mill terrorist can work out by conducting experiments in his bathtub. According to Ted Taylor, however, "if someone gets a hold of the Los Alamos critical-mass summaries, he can see how much material is critical in various forms—various ways of shaping the metal, various reflectors wrapped around it." Not planning a trip to New Mexico anytime soon? No problem. Critical-mass summaries can be obtained by writing to the National Technical Information Service in Washington, D.C. "They cost three dollars," offers Taylor.

PHOTO: DREAMWORKS PICTURES

Relax. It's only a movie—or is it?

In any event, such detailed information may not even be necessary. Luis Alvarez, a physicist of Manhattan Project fame, claims that if one possesses the right material, even imprecise information is sufficient to achieve a nuclear explosion. "With modern weapons-grade uranium," Alvarez points out in a NCI study, "... terrorists, if they had such material, would have a good chance of setting off a high-yield explosion simply by dropping one half of the material onto the other half. Most people seem unaware that if separated U-235 is at hand, it's a trivial job to set off a nuclear explosion. ... Even a high school kid could make a bomb in short order."

Of course know-how is of little use to a bomb-maker if he can't get his hands on the right ingredients. But the actual quantity of fissile material he'll need is pretty small. "The minimum amount of material needed to make a bomb is less than one kilogram of plutonium-239 or three kilograms of uranium-235," notes Taylor. And although a crude bomb constructed by terrorists would most likely require a larger critical mass of fissionable materials, the necessary quantity would still be far from prohibitive. The finished device, says Taylor, would be small enough "to fit in the trunk of a Volkswagen Beetle."

Nukes on the Loose

What's more, rounding up a bit of fissile material isn't as tough as it used to be, particularly in the destabilized states of the former USSR. In testimony before the Senate in March of last year, Sen. Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.) described a report by the General Accounting Office (GAO) that details the depths to which security at Soviet nuclear waste storage facilities has sunk: "A GAO investigator was able to enter one facility without identifying himself, and there was only one guard present, who was unarmed. There are other descriptions of incredibly lax security that even the most inept thief could easily penetrate undetected. It is almost an open invitation. The implications of this are staggering. A grapefruit-sized ball of uranium, which would weigh about 30 pounds, could obliterate the lower half of the city of New York. A lot more uranium than that is already unaccounted for. We do not know whether it is in the hands of terrorists, or where it is. All we know is that it is missing."

The nuclear weapons situation in Russia is no more comforting, with approximately 27,000 nuclear warheads and 1,300 tons of fissile material lying around, providing a tempting smorgasbord for wannabe terrorists. And in the wake of the USSR's collapse, the vigilance with which this stockpile was once guarded has deteriorated precipitously. Russian Gen. Alexander Lebed recently announced that during a routine inventory, 84 Special Atomic Demolition Munitions, or tactical nukes, were found to be missing from the Russian arsenal. All told, Russia has about 17,000 tactical nukes. Small enough to fit into an average-sized suitcase (making them a prime target for thieves), each bomb is capable of demolishing Man-

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hattan. And even though the U.S., through the Material Protection, Control, and Accounting Program, is working with authorities in the former Soviet states to remove or at least secure the nuclear material lying around in research facilities and nuclear power plants, much of this nuclear material will remain vulnerable to theft or sabotage for years to come. The gravity of the situation is evident to the Russians, if not to our own government: Last October, the director of one of Russia's major nuclear weapons research centers killed himself, explaining in his suicide note that he was no longer capable of guaranteeing the security of the nuclear materials under his supervision.

According to William Potter, Director of the Center for Nonproliferation Studies at the Monterey Institute of International Studies, in the former Soviet Union alone there have been seven documented cases of significant quantities of bomb-grade nuclear materials being stolen (as opposed to simply disappearing) since the USSR's collapse. And, according to a study

Who's Who

By Susan Threadgill

While she was energy secretary, **Hazel O'Leary**'s department awarded ICF Kaiser a $3.5 billion nuclear clean-up contract. Guess who now sits on ICF Kaiser's board?

Our prediction that OMB Director **Franklin Raines** would be the next White House chief of staff was wrong. He was offered the job but turned it down. The skinny is that he wants to be treasury secretary. One problem with this is that the incumbent, **Robert Rubin**, may not depart until 1999. Another catch is that Rubin's deputy, **Larry Summers**, wants the job too.

The new list of possible **Clinton** chiefs of staff includes National Security Adviser **Sandy Berger**, former Commerce Secretary and Trade Representative **Mickey Kantor**, and **John Hilley**, who lobbies Congress for the White House. But each has drawbacks. Kantor and Hilley have a lot of enemies in the White House, and some feel that Berger has been in his job too short a time to move and besides, we hear that he's less than eager to switch.

It turns out that **Marianne Gingrich**, **Newt**'s wife, has an investment savvy reminiscent of **Hillary Clinton**'s. Last year she made as much as $11,000 on three quick trades through D.H. Blair & Co. The market for at least one of these stocks was, according to *Money* magazine, "dominated [by D.H. Blair] to such an extent that prices ... were controlled by the brokerage." The firm has been fined for its actions by the National Association of Securities Dealers. What will conspiracy theorists make of the coincidence? Not only did the First Lady have unusual investment success, a Blair (**Jim**) was also involved and the firm that handled the transaction was disciplined.

If you wondered how that $50 billion tax break for the tobacco companies got slipped into the budget deal, **Margaret Carlson** has the story. It seems that **Haley Barbour**, the former GOP national chairman who is now a tobacco lobbyist, persuaded his pals **Trent Lott** and **Newt Gingrich** to insert the provision that Sen. **Richard Durbin** later was to say "shines and stinks like a mackerel in the moonlight." Barbour, according to Carlson, is paid $50,000 a month by the tobacco industry.

Now that **Ralph Reed** has left the Christian Coalition to become a political consultant, he's in great demand by Republicans planning to run for president in 2000. The smart money has him going with **George W. Bush** if he runs or staying neutral if he doesn't. But **Dan Quayle** is working hard to enlist Reed. So stay tuned.

Speaking of slipping items into bills, **Newt Gingrich**'s good friend Rep. **Nancy Johnson** last year inserted a provision into a "technical corrections" trade bill that would have financially benefited a tool manufacturing firm in which she owns more than "$100,000 in stock," according to *The Hill*'s **Erika Niedowski**. The provision, which was ultimately dropped from the bill, would have permitted the Stanley Works company of New Britain, Conn., to market tools as "Made in the USA" even though they were forged overseas.

This summer, the U.S. Office of Consumer Affairs was so broke that it had to shut down its consumer hot line. But the office's head, **Leslie Byrne**, was still able to find the money to pay for round-trip tickets to Paris for herself and an aide so she would be

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conducted by the Harvard-based Center for Science and International Affairs, nuclear material is already being traded on the black market. The study revealed that in August 1994, German police arrested two passengers on a flight from Moscow to Munich who were carrying a suitcase containing nearly a pound of 87 percent-pure plutonium-239. Likewise, in December of that same year, three kilograms of highly enriched uranium (87.5 percent pure) were seized in Prague, along with Soviet nuclear documents.

These were not isolated events. According to the CSIS report, "during a three-and-one-half month period in mid-1992, a chemical engineer named Leonid Smirnov stole approximately 3.7 pounds of HEU (90 percent enriched) from the Luch Scientific Production Association at Podolsk, Russia. Smirnov, who had been employed at the Luch plant since 1968, removed HEU from the plant on 20-25 separate occasions, each time using a 50-70 gram jar." And the list goes on.

able to attend a conference on consumer issues sponsored by the Organization of Economic and Community Development.

Paul Begala has been given the title of "counselor to the president," but this has not always been a good omen in **Bill Clinton**'s White House. Just ask **David Gergen**.

You have to hand it to **Ken Starr**; he does keep busy. In addition to acting as Whitewater independent counsel, he teaches a law course at New York University, serves as president of three organizations, sits on the board of seven others, makes as many as five speeches per month in places as far apart as Orlando, Fla., and Malibu, Cal., and practices law at the firm of Kirkland & Ellis where, according to **Walter Pincus** and **George Lardner Jr.** of *The Washington Post*, he made $1.1 million last year representing such companies as GTE, General Motors, Brown and Williamson, Amoco, and Hughes Aircraft.

Rep. **Dan Burton** brings impressive credentials to his assignment as chair of House hearings on campaign finance. He has been so successful at fundraising himself that his last campaign ended with a $900,000 surplus. He is especially qualified in the area of political contributions that might be deemed an attempt to influence foreign policy. You have already heard about his ties with Pakistan. But he also has, according to *The New York Times*, accepted "hundreds of thousands of dollars" from lobbyists with interests in our policies toward Guatemala, Turkey, Aruba, and Cuba, as well as Pakistan. Remember, he's the Burton of the Helms-Burton Act. His interest in Nicaragua is long-standing. Just last February, he placed in the congressional record what *The Hill* calls a "laudatory statement" about a book entitled *The Secret Life of the Sandinistas*. What was a bit curious about Burton's enthusiasm is that the book is written in Spanish, which the congressman does not speak. Then again, the book's author, **Roberto Arguello**, had given $2,000 to Burton's last campaign.

In case you missed **Dick Morris** when he was on CNN's "Inside Politics Weekend" last month, here's what he said, after noting that he thought **Bill Clinton** was honest, "I think his staff is composed of manipulators, liars, cheaters, fakers, and phonies."

You probably heard that **Princess Diana**'s death and his handling of it have been called **Tony Blair**'s Falklands because, like **Margaret Thatcher** from the war, Blair has emerged from the funeral with few doubting that he will be in power a long time. But you may have missed **Adam Gopnik**'s line in *The New Yorker*: "If it was evident from the moment of Diana's death that she would become the British Evita, it was less evident that Blair would become her **Andrew Lloyd Webber**."

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In a destabilized region undergoing profound economic and social transformations, such acts of theft are inevitable. As Senator Nunn stated in testimony delivered in September 1996, "It is simply unrealistic to assume that the tons of nuclear materials that are improperly secured, along with thousands of out-of-work Soviet weapons scientists and their equipment will never end up in the wrong hands. Add to this new proliferation problem the evidence of possible organized crime involvement in weapons smuggling and you have the ingredients of a full-blown disaster looming on the horizon."

But terrorist groups are not the only ones itching to get their hands on nuclear weapons. Rogue nations like Syria, Iran, and Iraq—many of which are known sponsors of terrorism—are determined to join the nuclear club, even if it requires a little extralegal shopping. For instance, in their new nonfiction book *One Point Safe* (on which "The Peacemaker" was loosely based), authors Andrew and Leslie Cockburn describe how Iraqi leader Sadaam Hussein's son Qusay leads a special covert unit charged with purchasing nuclear missile parts on the Russian black market.

Nor is the Soviet Union the only source of nukes for these nations. The raw ingredients they need to construct a viable weapon are often as close as the nearest nuclear power plant—located either within their own borders or in neighboring countries. Certain types of nuclear reactors, known as "breeders," produce a surplus of plutonium in a form that can be readily converted into weapons-grade material. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) is supposed to ensure that the nuclear material these plants use and produce is directed toward peaceful purposes only. But as Paul Leventhal, founder of the Nuclear Control Institute and former staff director of the Senate Nuclear Regulation Subcommittee, points out: "The IAEA acknowledges in its technical safeguards documents that, due to measurement uncertainties, its nuclear-accounting system cannot with confidence detect the diversion of bomb quantities of nuclear materials."

The technology is out there, the raw materials are plentiful—so just how worried should we be? Would a terrorist group that got its hands on a nuclear weapon actually dare to use it against us? Recent events speak for themselves: The World Trade Center bombing, the Aum Shinrikyo attack on the Tokyo subway, and the destruction of the Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City all point to a major shift in the sophistication and tactics of the world's fanatics. Bruce Hoffman, an analyst for the Rand organization, suggests that these events are a portent of what is to come: "The March 1995 deadly nerve gas on the Tokyo underground marks an historical watershed in terrorist tactics and weaponry. Previously, most terrorists had an aversion to the esoteric and exotic weapons of mass destruction popularized in fictional thrillers or depicted in action-hero movies and television shows. Indeed, the pattern of terrorism over three decades suggests that many groups are impelled by an inner dynamic, an organizational imperative, towards escalation."

Not only has the terrorists' modus operandi changed, but so, too, have their capabilities. Heretofore, it was erroneously presumed that terrorist organizations lacked the requisite infrastructure or resources to engage in nuclear terrorism. Yet the Aum, who were actively exploring the use of nuclear weapons, built an organization with 50,000 adherents, $1 billion in assets, and a staff of elite scientists—all without raising alarm. A congressional permanent subcommittee on investigations was shocked to find "that the Aum and their doomsday weapons were simply not on anybody's radar screen."

The Battle Plan

The proliferation of nuclear material and weapons, the destabilization of the Soviet regime, the vulnerability of American targets, and the growth of fanatic groups and rogue states have all combined to move us ever closer to nuclear disaster. So what's a conscientious superpower to do? The first, most important step: place greater emphasis on the control of fissile material.

To its credit, the Clinton administration has taken a stab at addressing the problem. It has convinced the former Soviet republics of Ukraine, Belarus, and Kazakhstan to give up their nuclear weapons (though not all their nuclear materials) in exchange for economic assistance. And it has helped physically remove more than 1,300 pounds of highly enriched uranium from Kazakhstan. There remains, however, much to be done. Our only hope of preventing an apocalyptic terrorist event is through a multi-step program that first moves to secure the existing stockpiles of fissile materials, then works to develop organizations with the skills and infrastructure to prevent terrorist attacks. Among the actions the U.S. should take:

1) Develop a systematic method of providing physical protection for existing stockpiles of fissile materials that exist throughout the world. This method may include rendering this material "inactive" through innovative encasement procedures, or in the case of highly enriched uranium, through dilution with non-fissile uranium isotopes. The United States must also

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insist that such standards for containment are adopted by the global nuclear community; otherwise, they will be of little value.

2) Develop a set of international protocols for the transfer of fissile materials that includes a method of tracking their whereabouts during transit.

3) Create an international intelligence organization capable of monitoring and responding to threats of nuclear terrorism.

Unfortunately, at present, U.S. leaders seem more excited by the pursuit of pie-in-the-sky missile defense systems (which scored a whopping $3.8 billion in the latest defense budget) than in the more pedestrian task of safeguarding fissile materials. As the Harvard Center for Science and International Affairs study concluded: "Despite the serious threat of loose nuclear weapons and fissile materials and despite the existence of a panoply of measures that could help reduce the likelihood of leakage from the deadly arsenal of former Soviet weapons and fissile materials, at present there appears to be little prospect that America's leaders ... will take the lead in crafting a more ambitious and potentially effective anti-leakage effort. No new initiative, however vital to the interests of the United States, has much prospect of getting a serious hearing in the climate of massive deficits, deep budget cuts, partisan rivalry, electoral calculations, and shrinking imagination."

But such misplaced priorities are too dangerous to be left uncorrected. Congress, and the American people, need to fully awaken to the challenge and the danger that face us. Nuclear terrorism is a global threat that will require a coordinated international response. The United States released the nuclear genie; it has an obligation to take the lead in stuffing it back in the bottle. ●

The
Washington Monthly
Journalism Award

SEPTEMBER 1997

MICHELE DERUS
A Dream Deferred
(Milwaukee) Journal Sentinel

Derus offers a fresh look at the impact of pervasive racism in the Milwaukee housing market. Among her most interesting and disheartening findings is that, due to continued white flight, property values are likely to erode in the city's newly integrated neighborhoods, depriving black middle-class homebuyers of one of the most basic foundations of the American dream—a good return on their investment.

EARL LANE
Leftovers Of the Nuclear Age
Newsday

Lane takes on the ultimate NIMBY dilemma: what to do with the decades' worth of nuclear waste that has been accumulating at reactors across the country. Despite spending billions of dollars researching a possible repository site in Nevada, the Energy Department is unlikely to meet a congressionally mandated deadline to take care of the waste by January 1998. Meanwhile, the waste is piling up in (often unsafe) storage facilities, and consumers are footing the bill.

ANTHONY LEWIS
Abroad at Home: No Peace, No Security
The New York Times

Throughout years of conflict in the Middle East and overheated debate here in the United States, columnist Anthony Lewis has consistently provided a voice of reason and fairness. His even-handed approach was most recently demonstrated in his piece this September in which he condemns Benjamin Netanyahu for failing to deliver either the peace or the security the prime minister had promised during his campaign.

THE MONTHLY JOURNALISM AWARD is presented each month to one or more newspaper, magazine, radio, or television stories (or series of stories) that demonstrate a commitment to the public interest. We are particularly interested in reporting that explains the successes and failures of government agencies at all levels and of other institutions such as the media, corporations, unions, and foundations that contribute to the existence or solution of public problems. Please send nominations (including two copies of the article or broadcast text) to Monthly Journalism Award, 1611 Connecticut Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20009. Nominations for stories run in October are due November 1.

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The Double-Edged Helix

Advances in genetic testing reveal yet another reason we need national health insurance

BY KATHLEEN KENNEDY TOWNSEND

A 20-YEAR VETERAN OF THE POSTAL service loses his vision because of a genetic disorder known as Leber's Optic Atrophy. No longer able to work, he applies for and receives disability benefits. But upon a routine review, the supervising government agency cuts off his benefits: Though he had no symptoms when he started as a mailman and, in fact, did not even know of his condition until its onset, the agency says his genetic predisposition for the disease represents a pre-existing condition.

A health insurer denies coverage to a five-year-old boy with a genetic predisposition to heart disease but no symptoms whatsoever. Deducing his condition from the medicine his doctor prescribes to *prevent* the onset of disease, the insurer says his genetic code disqualifies him for insurance.

A three-year-old boy is diagnosed with MPS syndrome, a genetic disease that causes severe damage to bones, joints, and tissue. The family's private health insurer promptly informs the boy's parents that it is canceling the boy's policy. Diagnosed or not, it says, any genetic disease is pre-existing because the genetic cause has been with the boy since conception.

Welcome to the dark side of the genetic revolution. As with the other great advances in knowledge and technology—the invention of dynamite and the discovery of the atom, for instance—genetic research's enormous potential for good is shadowed by an equally immense potential for harm.

Genetic research is marching forward, uncovering the roots of more and more diseases, and inspiring hope that they may one day be curable. But at the same time, the extraordinary medical benefits are clouded by the fact that gene research now offers insurance companies new ways to trim their expenses by denying coverage to those most in need of insurance.

The promise and peril of the genetic revolution were never in sharper relief than this past summer, when scientists announced they had traced the root of colon cancer to a gene mutation found primarily in Jews of Eastern European descent. The medical implications, of course, are breathtaking. Those who carry the gene mutation can get regular colonoscopies to detect the disease in its early, treatable stages. But the same information that may save lives may be used by insurance companies to raise premiums, deny applicants, or cancel coverage for those who carry the colon cancer gene.

The fact that the gene mutation for colon cancer occurs almost exclusively in Jews begs a haunting question: Could being Jewish soon be a handicap to finding good health insurance?

In many ways this is just a new revision of an old problem. Insurance companies have always looked for better ways to weed out those who may one day fall ill and, consequently, need expensive treatment. In the '70s, insurance companies raised rates on African-Americans because of the risk of sickle-cell anemia. At the outset of the AIDS epidemic, some health insurers refused coverage to people who lived in what were known to be gay neighborhoods.

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Though the opportunities for genetic discrimination are now limited to those diseases known to be inherited, the chances for abuse will multiply along with our understanding of the science. Before long, scientists will uncover the genetic roots to more and more diseases, and it will be more possible than ever—for ourselves, our doctors, and our insurance companies—to predict who will come down with what illness.

This poses an extremely thorny public policy question: How do we pursue genetic information and the benefits for individual health while preventing its misuse? That is, how can we ensure that patients enjoy the full benefits of genetic research without fear that their DNA code may be used to deny them insurance?

We need an answer soon. Our understanding of DNA accelerates with every new discovery. But there is something darkly reassuring about its direction. Before long, we will *all* be uninsurable. Somewhere in our genetic makeup there will likely be some defect, some risk to turn an actuary's knees to jelly.

Therein lies reason to be optimistic. Because every American faces the same challenge—genetic diseases are not subject to geographical or economic distinctions—every American has an equal stake in finding a solution.

The country took a giant step toward meeting this challenge when President Clinton proposed legislation that would make it illegal for employers and health and life insurers to discriminate in any way on the grounds of genetic information. If the bill passes, insurers will not be able to raise rates or deny coverage to anyone on the basis of their genetic code, whether that information is determined from a DNA test or a family-history questionnaire. Nor would employers be able to fire or not hire a qualified employee because they fear picking up the tab for a genetic illness down the road. The legislation would eliminate the most blatant form of discrimination.

But it is not a final answer to the challenge posed by the genetic dawn, as the president himself has said. An insurance company does not need a DNA test to keep applicants with questionable genes off their rolls. If an insurer wanted to keep those with genetic predispositions for, say, hemophilia off their rolls, they might merely eliminate coverage for clinics that specialize in treating the disease. They could also place a $500-per-year cap on blood transfusion services. Someone who suspects that they or their children may develop hemophilia would naturally want to shop elsewhere.

Furthermore, insurers can treat people with genetic flaws differently without giving reasons why. A medical director of a large insurance company in Canada described how this might work for the Human Genome Project's Ethical, Legal, and Scientific Implications Task Force on Genetic Information and Insurance. As quoted in an article by Brandeis Professor Deborah A. Stone, the medical director said: "If a woman has a family history of breast cancer, I'll ignore the breast cancer. I won't rate her for the breast cancer, but I'll scrutinize her record extra carefully. I'll rate her for hypertension. I'll hope there is something else I can find in the record to rate her on. I'll tell her I rated her on hypertension. I won't tell her I rated her higher than someone else with the same hypertension."

As despicable as this sounds, it isn't difficult to understand where insurers are coming from. Health insurers, we must remember, are businesses. They exist to make money, not to care for us when we get sick. If they determine with more accuracy who is going to get sick and who will not, they make more money. To them, the genetic revolution is a dream come true, and one way or another, they will make it work for them.

The real difficulty, therefore, doesn't lie in the genetic information and who has access to it, but in the practice of underwriting itself—that is, in the right of insurance companies to deny someone coverage or set different rates for health reasons. After all, why is it unfair to deny health insurance because someone carries the breast cancer gene, but okay to deny coverage to someone who has chronic back problems because a drunk driver once crashed into her car? In either case, we penalize people—often with the gravest of consequences—for circumstances beyond their control.

So long as matters of life and death are left to the blind and often cruel logic of the marketplace, injustices will occur. Gene research only presents more opportunities, thus making it more common. As the research progresses, it becomes ever clearer that the country must ensure that every American has access to affordable health care coverage.

Right now, it is time for the nation and its political leaders to take a second look at national, universal health insurance so that no American will have to fear that his or her genes will be used against them.

Most politicians consider this suggestion the equivalent of asking Napoleon to take a second crack at Russia. Who can blame them? But they may want to consider a 1995 Harris poll that showed that 85 percent of Americans fear that they may one day be the victim of genetic discrimination. Last time I checked, that was enough to win any election. ●

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THOSE WERE THE DAYS

On being a journalist in Paris in the '50s

BY STANLEY KARNOW

THOUSANDS OF YOUNG AMERICANS were flocking to Europe after World War II, and I joined the throng. Late in June 1947, fresh out of college, I went to Paris, planning to stay for the summer. I stayed for 10 years.

Pourquoi Paris? Its name alone was magic. The city, the legendary *Ville Lumiere*, promised something for everyone—beauty, sophistication, culture, cuisine, sex, escape, and that indefinable called ambiance. "When good Americans die they go to Paris," ran Oscar Wilde's oft-quoted quip. That was certainly not my purpose in going there, but then, what was it? Perhaps, simply, Paris.

Modern European history and literature had been my major at Harvard, and my courses on France had acquainted me with the *ancien régime* and the Enlightenment, the Revolution, the Napoleonic era, the Third Republic and, most recently, the valiant Resistance during the German occupation. I had grappled with the works of Molière, Racine, Descartes, Voltaire, and *les philosophes*, Hugo, Flaubert, Stendhal, Balzac, Maupassant, Baudelaire, Verlaine, Rímbaud, Zola, Gide, Proust, and postwar intellectuals like Jean-Paul Sartre, Simone de Beauvoir, and Albert Camus. Dabbling in art had left me with some notions about Monet, Manet, Degas, Van Gogh, Toulouse-Lautrec, Picasso, Braque, and the Surrealists and Dadaists. I had been enchanted by such French film classics as "*La Grande Illusion*," "*La Femme du Boulanger*," and "*Les Enfants du Paradis*," and knew the songs of Maurice Chevalier and Charles Trenet by heart. Along with the rest of my generation, I had read Hemingway, Fitzgerald, and smuggled copies of Henry Miller's salacious novels, and dreamed of retracing their footsteps through Montparnasse, Saint-Germain-des-Prés, and the Boulevard de Clichy. I was further gulled by the real or exaggerated recollections of GIs and their doughboy fathers of compliant French women—the eternal Mademoiselle from Armentières.

Air travel was then expensive, and most of us crossed the Atlantic by ship, usually third class. My friend and fellow *Harvard Crimson* editor, Anthony Lewis, the future *New York Times* columnist, wangled us passage for $50 each aboard a coal freighter bound for Le Havre. I stuffed some clothes and a supply of Camels into a rucksack and my old army duffel bag, and we sailed from Baltimore. We had been at sea for a week, idly reading and playing chess, when a radiogram advised the captain that a strike had paralyzed Le Havre and ordered the ship to Rotterdam. Both German and Allied bombing had leveled the city. I had served during the war in India and China, agricultural lands that were spared such destruction, and the scene as we docked stunned me. But it was only a prelude to the devastation I would witness elsewhere in Europe.

Á Paris

The city, I noticed, had still not recovered from the war. Such essentials as milk, bread, butter, cheese, and eggs were rationed, and even resident foreigners like me had to queue up with citizens at the *mairie* of their arrondissement to be issued coupons by functionaries—usually cranky old women, many of them war widows. Neglected for years, public and private buildings needed repainting and other repairs. But the French were *débrouillards*, or manipulators. They got around by bicycle, tricycle, horse carts, rickety trucks and cars, or whatever else moved, including ingenious Rube Goldberg contraptions propelled by kerosene or charcoal engines. Men in shabby suits sported bou-

From the book Paris in the Fifties *by* STANLEY KARNOW, *winner of the 1990 Pulitzer Prize in history.* *Copyright © 1997 by Stanley Karnow. Reprinted with permission of Random House Inc.*

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tonnières, while women achieved a touch of chic by adding a certain *je ne sais quoi* to their threadbare dresses. Everything from coffee to penicillin was available on the ubiquitous black market—for a price.

A New Job at Time

After two years as a student, I luckily landed a job as a gofer in *Time*'s Paris bureau, whose chief, John Stanton, called me his "thin brown native boy." Despite my menial status, I was elated to be employed by one of America's top publications, and later became a correspondent. But soon I realized that its subtitle, the "weekly newsmagazine," was a misnomer. Apart from piling up profits, which it did with enormous success, its principal purpose for its founder and editor-in-chief, Henry Luce, was to propagate his personal opinions, without the slightest regard for objectivity, much less balance. A die-hard Republican, he expected *Time* and its siblings, *Life* and *Fortune*, to mirror the party line. In 1952 he granted leaves of absence to a number of his senior associates to help Dwight D. Eisenhower's campaign for the presidency and, following Ike's election, encouraged them to serve as White House aides. Luce defied easy definition, however. Though fiercely anticommunist, he refused to bless the GOP's opportunistic endorsement of Joe McCarthy and, from an early date, ordered his editors to denounce the demagogic senator. As an internationalist, he also rejected the isolationism of many Republicans.

If one trait encapsulated him, it was his Presbyterian zeal. The son of China missionaries, he ardently believed in America's superiority in the struggle between good and evil, and disdained countries that failed to meet his lofty standards. The French fit that mold. No matter how chic, urbane, and creative they might be, to him they were morally permissive and thus unreliable allies. Luce never imposed that view on the bureau, but it filtered down to us, and we tended to treat the French with contempt, condescension, derision, or, at best, amusement. After a while, I began to feel, a *Time* subscriber might conclude that, by and large, France was a degenerate nation of gourmets, adulterers, leftist intellectuals, and volatile politicians who could not prevent their government from collapsing every few months.

Luce's prejudices seldom intruded into the "back of the book" departments—Medicine, Education, Science, Theater, Art, and Books—which were admired even by readers revolted by *Time*'s political slant. A primary goal of the magazine was to entertain—and it did. The sentences no longer ran backward until reeled the mind, as they had in its infancy: "Pleased as punch was Bobby Jones after sinking the putt." Nor were characters still depicted as "beady-eyed," "pig-faced," or "snaggle-toothed." But much of the jazzy Timestyle minted by Timeditors remained intact. Labeled "tycoons," big bankers and corporation directors invariably "strode" rather than walked into boardrooms. Hollywood executives were "moguls," whose movies attracted "cinemaddicts." A dead hero was the "late great," a mistress a "great & good friend." On the theory that exaggeration sells, a concept dear to tabloids, credibility was sacrificed to readability. Once, when I haggled over a fine point, I was told, "Don't let the facts interfere with a good story."

But whatever the magazine's idiosyncrasies, the company had transformed the traditional craft of journalism into an industry that functioned with assembly-line precision. The collegial procedure, advertised as "group journalism," was supposed to provide *Time*'s audience with the best available expertise, compressed into simple, digestible bites devoid of troublesome nuances and complexities.

A worldwide network of anonymous correspondents would cable long and frequently authoritative dispatches to the headquarters at Rockefeller Center in New York, where they were completely revamped—and inevitably distorted—by skilled wordsmiths into a few silky-smooth, swift-paced, adjective-riddled paragraphs. Assiduous women researchers then placed a red dot over every word to indicate that it had been checked and double-checked for accuracy, yet the final product was filled with errors. Many editors spoofed the system, dubbing it "grope journalism." Frustrated, some of the brightest—Archibald MacLeish, Louis Kronenberger, James Agee, Theodore White, John Hersey, John McPhee—resigned to become prominent authors. Most of the others stayed. The pay and perks were generous, the hours short, the camaraderie congenial. A warm, benevolent paternalism also suffused the company. Staffers could anticipate Luce's condolences on a relative's death or, on the birth of a baby, a silver Tiffany porringer engraved with the inscription: "To Cathy from Harry Luce and all her father's friends at Time Inc." For hundreds of employees and their wives, the organization was an extended family; years after their retirement they would congregate at annual reunions, at which they drank and mistily exchanged memories.

Called Harry by everyone, Luce rejoiced in debate, for which even his most implacable critics respected him. After Eisenhower appointed his wife, Clare, ambassador to Rome, he often visited Paris—and the ritual was always the same. The members of the bureau

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would assemble in a private room at a fancy restaurant and, my lowly position notwithstanding, I was included. Luce, who dismissed food as "just fuel," sped through the meal, then guided us into a bull session. The complex nuances of a question bored him. Instead, like his magazines, he had a knack for shrinking a broad canvas to a quick sketch. Nothing symbolized Europe's postwar recovery more vividly than did the motor scooter, he once proclaimed—thereby touching off a slew of stories on motor scooters. He was the precursor of television news.

During those days, however, none of this ruffled me. I was in glamorous Paris, gaining experience and having a ball while my chums back home were striving to launch their journalistic careers in Hartford, Dayton, or Seattle.

Unlike the grind that confronted newspaper or wire agency reporters, our rhythm was cyclical. On Tuesday morning the staff of five or six correspondents and assorted assistants sank into sofas in the bureau chief's large office to bat around possible stories.

The heavy hitters usually offered cosmic ideas—"deep dish," we termed them—such as developments in the effort to integrate the European economy, or the problems of the Atlantic Alliance as a result of France's resistance to West Germany's rearmament. Unless we could dig up a fresh angle, the perils of the fragile French cabinet was stale. Groans and moans invariably greeted important but lusterless proposals, like the growing pollution in Burgundy's canals or the prospering lace trade in Brittany. By contrast, a juicy murder, particularly one involving sex, was surefire. Our territory ranged from Holland, Belgium, and Luxembourg through Switzerland, Spain, Portugal, and North Africa; and stringers in those places intermittently weighed in—though we never heard from our man in Gibraltar. We would send the suggestions to New York for approval, and the editors cabled back their preferences the next day.

The deadline for copy was Friday. Some correspondents struggled to turn out a finished piece; others, knowing that it would all be homogenized, just shoveled in whatever they had accumulated. Furiously competing for space, the writers in New York dunned us for cutesy if irrelevant factoids that would get a story into print. One of my tasks was to field their queries, and I often concocted the answers. Asked if Charles de Gaulle wore false teeth, for example, I responded, "Sources here say only molars." Anne Chamberlin, my spunky analogue at *Life*, was more diligent. Requested to confirm a rumor that the famous artists' model Kiki de Montparnasse had no pubic hair, she polled several of Kiki's former lovers and replied: "Some but not much."

The immense sums at their disposal enabled the editors to schedule more stories than could ever be published, which gave them the luxury of choice; but it was probably the most profligate operation in journalistic history. We would file thousands of words, only to see a miniscule fraction of them run. The "usage cable" we received every Monday contained the score. For the week ending April 23, 1952, for instance, fewer than 300 lines were distilled from 18 dispatches. To boost their morale, the authors of discards were complimented in phrases like "wonderful but killed due makeup problem" or "excellent but outspaced." The euphemism "held for revival" meant burial in an archive in New Jersey.

Men At Work

At about noon every day, we repaired for martinis to the Crillon Bar, situated in the elegant Crillon Hotel next to the bureau. The bar was a hangout for American and English correspondents; Sam White of the *London Standard* did all his reporting from a telephone in his exclusive niche in the corner. Louis, le barman, was right out of Central Casting, with his patent-leather hair, unctuous smile, and flaccid handshake. From there we would go on to La Turite or Madame Albert, where we knocked off a bottle of wine each over a four-course lunch. Only our *Time* colleague, Fred Klein, deviated from this routine. A cranky, reclusive Swiss, he religiously ate alone at the Rompanneau, his newspaper propped against his carafe of wine. Once, when the maitre d'hôtel casually remarked on the weather, Klein stalked out and never returned.

After lunch we would stagger back to the office to gather for our daily diversion—gin rummy. An obsessive gambler, Klein arranged the game. The regulars, in addition to myself, included Dmitri Kessel, the *Life* photographer; the head of the *Life* team, Milton Orshefsky; and Art Buchwald, the *Paris Herald-Tribune* columnist. Sometimes visitors from New York joined us, like Gjon Mili, a freelance photographer, and Emmet Hughes, a *Fortune* editor who was to become Eisenhower's speechwriter. Catastrophe struck in 1952, when Eric Gibbs, a priggish former British army colonel, took over as bureau chief and forbade gin as frivolous. Our afternoons dragged on morosely until one day in May 1954, when we learned that he had died of a massive heart attack while working on a story in Geneva. Klein immediately organized a game—and, as he shuffled the deck exclaimed, "Thank the Lord for our bereavement." ●

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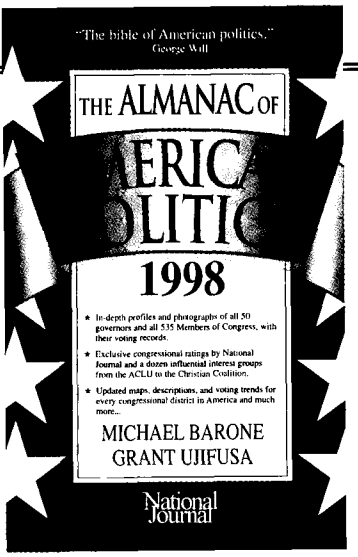

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National Journal

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Kooks Around the Corner

Why we just can't get enough of conspiracy theories, and what our obsession is costing us

Christopher Buckley

CONSPIRACY: How the Paranoid Style Flourishes and Where It Comes From
By Daniel Pipes
The Free Press, $25

IN COLLEGE, I WAS A MEMBER OF a secret society. I worked at the White House for Vice President George Bush, who, in addition to being a member of the Council on Foreign Relations and the Trilateral Commission, is also a member of that same secret society. My father, another member of the secret society, founded *National Review* magazine. The lawyer who drew up the documents incorporating *NR* was William Casey, who would go on to become director of the CIA under Ronald Reagan. Before he became a magazine editor, my father worked for the CIA. His immediate boss was E. Howard Hunt, who went on to Watergate fame, along with his colleague, G. Gordon Liddy. I later hired Liddy to write a column on security for the magazine that I edit. The magazine is owned by Steve Forbes, past and future presidential candidate. Forbes Inc.'s chairman is Caspar Weinberger, who worked for Richard Nixon and Ronald Reagan. At the White House, I worked closely with Donald P. Gregg, Bush's national security adviser. Don had had a very distinguished career at the CIA for over 30 years. In Vietnam, his comrade-in-arms was Felix Rodriguez, the CIA officer who helped track down Che Guevara in Bolivia. You remember Felix. Iran-Contra? The Senate and *The Washington Post*, egged on by the Christic Institute and assorted people with the last name of Cockburn, tried very hard to nail Don for, among other things, helping to orchestrate the famous 1980 October Surprise—traveling in secret to Paris with George Bush to persuade the Iranians not to release the American hostages until after Reagan had been elected. Call up Christopher Hitchens at *The Nation*; he'll fill you in on all the details, though he's rather busy these days establishing Mother Teresa's villainy. Anyway, Don survived and became ambassador to South Korea, where previously he had been CIA station chief. I married his daughter. She worked for the CIA, too. She—well, I don't have time to get into all that. I have to review this book for you called *Conspiracy: How the Paranoid Style Flourishes and Where It Comes From*. It's a fine, important, even invaluable book. The author is Daniel Pipes. Come to think of it, I knew his father, Richard Pipes, the eminent Russian scholar. We sort of worked together at the White House. He was Reagan's top Soviet adviser. I also worked at the White House with C. Boyden Gray. Mention the name of his father, Gordon Gray, to any serious UFOlogist and they will coo and stroke their chins and tell you that Gordon Gray was a member of the shadowy, ultra-secret group called Majestic-12 that ran the first flying-saucer cover up. Are you getting the picture? Don't you think I know the fix is in? Quick, close those curtains, I hear a black helicopter!

How many bogeymen can you count in that paragraph?

Conspiracism consists of discerning motives in raw connective tissue, or in refusing to accept apparent syllogisms. Mark Fuhrman used the n-word, therefore he planted the glove. Lee Harvey Oswald was a nerd, therefore he could not have brought down King Arthur by himself. Pipes' book, which should have been titled *Conspiracism*, could very well have been titled *Cherchez*

CHRISTOPHER BUCKLEY'S *new book*, God Is My Broker, *written with John Tierney, will be published by Random House in April.*

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Les Juifs, for the bulk of it is taken up by mankind's obsession with spotting Rothschilds and Cohens in every woodpile, from the Russian Revolution to—strange as it may sound—Hitler's rise to power, but then no leap of logic is too great for a committed conspiracist or anti-Semite. There is a web site for those who think that the Holocaust was a hoax. Go figure.

How did the Jews come in for such special treatment? The Hellenistic writer Origen (185-254 AD) set the tone when he said that the Jews had formed a—key word—"conspiracy against the Saviour of the human race." But it wasn't until a French crusade to the Holy Land in 1096-99 that anti-Semitism coalesced around specific fears that this relatively tiny band of Israelites was systematically out to get the gentiles, by means of devious banking practices and—key word—secret societies.

France would make another significant contribution to conspiracism 800 years later, in the person of Augustin De Barruel (1741-1820), whom Pipes calls, "history's most important conspiracy theorist." (Sorry, Oliver.) De Barruel was a French ex-Jesuit and abbot who wrote the four-volume *Memoirs Illustrating the History of Jacobinism*, a best-selling masterwork of fear-mongering that blamed secret societies, Freemasons, and the Bavarian Illuminati for conspiring to overthrow Christianity and private property. It was to remain the influential paranoid handbook until the appearance of *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* in Paris in the 1890s, about the time of the Dreyfus affair. *The Protocols*, arguably the most poisonous racial document of the modern era, purported to be a transcript of the first Zionist Congress in Basel, Switzerland, in 1897. It was a forgery, sponsored by the head of the Paris office of the Okhrana, the Tsar's secret police. Interestingly, his intent wasn't so much to convince the world that the Jews had a secret master plan for world domination, but to prove to Tsar Nicholas II that Russian liberals were their agents. Hitler's smoking gun was a tsarist police forgery.

The Germans, of course, were predisposed toward anti-Semitism, having what Pipes calls "a unique motive ... the *volkisch* nostalgia for Wagner's heroically pagan epoch of Siegfied, Tristan, and the Niebelung. That wondrous age ended when the Jews imposed the effete outlook called Christianity, a variant of their own religion, on Germans. As German speakers (Hitler included) developed a longing for the time before Christianity, the Jewish conspiracy came to include Jesus, the Church fathers, and the popes."

It takes dedication and hard work to turn the pope into an agent of Theodor Herzl. Conspiracism is a wilderness of mirrors, an ironist's Disneyland. Pipes notes that the only real world conspiracy was the one begun by Lenin and refined brilliantly by Stalin. And what was the reaction of the Left, prime purveyors of conspiracy theory? To ridicule the very idea of its existence. When the real thing rears its ugly head, conspiracists refuse to acknowledge it: "... the cognoscenti pooh-pooh allegations about these [Nazi and Soviet] global ambitions: Winston Churchill met with much disdain in the 1930s when he talked of the 'jackboots,' as did Ronald Reagan in the 1980s with his one-time reference to the 'evil empire'. Both totalitarian movements may have relied on semiclandestine structures and made-over plans for world hegemony, but they attracted less notice than empires put together in a fit of absent-mindedness (Great Britain), hardly existent (United States), or completely fantastical (Jews)."

The Left, Pipes notes, is better at incubating and promulgating conspiracy theories, for a number of reasons. One is its daring, or ballsiness. Shouldn't Lee Harvey Oswald—committed Marxist, U.S. defector to Russia, friend of Castro's Cuba—have been a poster boy for a *left-wing* conspiracy to kill Kennedy? And yet Jim Garrison, Edward Jay Epstein, Mark Lane, Oliver Stone, and others managed successfully to decoct a right-wing conspiracy! But then the Left is generally more sophisticated than the Right, giving it the upper hand in discerning the hidden hand. "A worldly, well-educated analyst does not fall prey to conspiracist demons with the same sincerity as does a janitor. Yahoos on the Right appear almost universally heartfelt in their fears of Jews and Freemasons; leftist sophisticates lack that same veracity. Rather, they seemingly spread conspiracy theories as a means to further their political agenda; in case after case, conspiracism serves their goals. On the grandest scale, if Hitler represents conspiracism gone mad, Stalin stands for something altogether craftier."

Mixed Nuts

At the end of this penetrating—and somewhat depressing—book, Pipes declares that "Conspiracism is a story in six acts." Six degrees of separation, from the crusades to the modern era. Or you can work in reverse, starting with the 30 gunmen in Dallas, or the glove-planting, DNA-squirting cops in Brentwood and work your way back to the Knights Templar. What a great board game it would make: Conspiracy! The "Risk!" of the '90s. Whoops! That crack cocaine you sold to the CIA to distribute in U.S. ghettos turns out to belong to the Rothschilds! Drink one gallon of

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fluoridated water and resubscribe to *The Nation.*

It might be funny if it weren't for the dismal figure that Pipes cites as conspiracism's 20th century theoretical body count: 169 million. (See the chapter entitled "Conspiracism's Costs.") The term is "democide," new to us: "mass murder outside the context of warfare ... 62 million in the Soviet Union, 35 million killed by Communist Chinese, 21 million by the Nazis, 10 million by the Chinese nationalists, and 6 million by the Japanese militarists."

And yet Pipes is in the end optimistic, regarding conspiracist paranoia as a spent force in the West and Europe. He quotes Charles Krauthammer, who notes that the incessant, media-driven drumbeat of hairball notions is so unremitting as to "raise an eyebrow, but never a fist. A politics so trivialized is conducive to neither great decision making nor decisive leadership. But it is also nicely immunized from the worst of political pathologies. In the end, Oliver Stone ... is just another entertainment, another day at the movies. The shallowness of our political culture has a saving grace."

As democracies mature, says Pipes, we have less and less need to fix blame on manipulative Hebrew bankers, calculating Jesuits, or pin-striped one-worlders sipping sherry at the Council on Foreign Relations. Our biggest worry now—and here we all agree—is the little green men in the UFOs with their fearsome rectal probes. Close that window!

Don't you think I know the fix is in? Quick, close those curtains, I hear a black helicopter!

Danger Everywhere

Perhaps Pipes is right. But after soaking in his study of 1,000 years of paranoia, I'm feeling a little clammy and twitchy. As I write, the Rev. Al Sharpton is all over the front pages, having turned out enough votes to complicate a Democratic New York mayoral primary. Were it not for his way with words—"bloodsucking Jews" is one of his boilerplate phrases—and a reputation built on a rather nasty hoax—the Tawana Brawley affair—this humble man of the cloth might only be known to us as a fat, medallioned tax cheat. Recently, a leading California newspaper, the *San Jose Mercury News*, reported that it was the CIA that initiated the crack epidemic in America's inner cities—and then somewhat blandly recanted. JFK's former press secretary called a press conference to declare that he had proof that the U.S. military shot down an American civilian airliner.

Now Princess Diana is dead and the *New York Post* says that she was thinking of becoming a Catholic. There's potting soil for a wowser conspiracy theory. Muammar Khadafi, the Howard Stern of the North African littoral, went on the airwaves to announce that the Princess of Wales had obviously been offed by the Windsors so that the future King William would not be encumbered by a wog stepfather. And now *Time* hints that Diana may have been pregnant. Conjure for a moment on the lurid reductios in that one.

Tabloid fodder? It depends on your definition of a tabloid. The day after Mother Teresa's funeral, *The New York Times* devoted five column inches to coverage of her funeral. The same front page devoted twice that amount to a story announcing that women in New York were talking about Diana to their psychiatrists. (Be honest: Which story did you read first?)

Eighty percent of Americans think that the government is hiding information from them about flying saucers. Two thirds of Americans think that aliens crash-landed at Roswell. Twenty-five percent of Americans think aliens are harvesting people's eggs. Followers of Louis Farrakhan believe that the white race resulted from an experiment by a mad doctor named Yakub. Christian fundamentalists think that supermarket bar codes are an instrument of Satan. More than 70 percent of Americans think President Kennedy was killed in a conspiracy. So, how optimistic are you feeling today about the demise of conspiracism in our mature democracy?

The question remains: Does it matter what people believe? The minds reels from that horrendous death tally that Pipes cites—169 million. Ironic to consider that Timothy McVeigh, conspiracist, devotee of *The Turner Diaries*, our generation's *Protocols*, has just been convicted of—key word—conspiracy to murder a microcosm of that number, 169 human beings. What was it they used to say in Vietnam? "Just because you're paranoid doesn't mean the little bastards aren't out to get you." Next time someone shrugs off the fevered rantings of Pat Robertson, Ellen Chenoweth, Ice T, Louis Farrakhan, Leonard Jeffries, or the auteur of *JFK* as so much innocuous nonsense, tell them you've got a book for them. ●

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Prodigal Son

How Arkansas Gov. Orval Faubus went from hillbilly populist to segregationist icon

By Gene Lyons

FAUBUS: The Life and Times of an American Prodigal
By Roy Reed
University of Arkansas Press; $38

IT IS IN THE NATURE OF THINGS that this review must begin with a disclaimer. As the world now knows, it is exceedingly difficult in a small state like Arkansas for a public figure like, say, the governor, to do business public or private with a banker with whom he is not personally acquainted. Writers being rather less common than bankers in these latitudes, it is virtually impossible for one Arkansas author to comment upon the work of another to whom he is a stranger. I first met Roy Reed when he returned to Arkansas from a successful career as a foreign correspondent for *The New York Times* to piddle with cattle at his farm in Hogeye and teach journalism at the University of Arkansas. We shared an office there one semester 16 years ago and have enjoyed several evenings together over the years.

More importantly, when his old paper printed a hostile, dismissive review of my book *Fools for Scandal: How the Media Invented Whitewater*, Reed wrote a letter to the editor of the Book Review saying how much it pained him to say that the *Times* had gotten both Whitewater and my book wrong. Such is his reputation among his former colleagues that the newspaper felt compelled to print it. Please forgive the indulgence. As I've been very scornful of the buddy system of book reviewing during my career as a literary journalist, there's simply no way I could write about Reed's book without making what politicians call "full disclosure" up front.

Then there's the matter of Arkansas itself. The story of the life and times of Gov. Orval Eugene Faubus is above all an Arkansas story, and it's also in the nature of things that those of us who call this screwy little place home tend to feel very emotional about it. Exactly why local patriotism runs so strong here is hard to say. The state's physical beauty has something to do with it. But so does its tumultuous social history; also the very intimacy I spoke of earlier. Living here is a bit like living in a small country. Even during the Clinton era, the state remains as strongly flavored and provincial as it's possible for an American place to be. Arkansans are proud and touchy, highly resentful of condescending outsiders, yet bitterly self-critical and riven by old wounds that haven't quite healed over.

Reed's biography of Faubus partakes of that same passionate ambivalence. Besides the lyrical clarity of his prose, it's one of the book's best qualities. Orval Faubus' futile defiance of the federal government during the 1957 Little Rock Central High integration crisis shamed his native state before the nation and the world. It also succeeded in winning for Faubus himself near-dictatorial powers which he used ruthlessly to suppress dissent, punish his political enemies and line his own pockets. If ever the state of Arkansas deserved the accusations of backwardness and corruption thrown at it by Bill Clinton's enemies, it was during the last five of Faubus' six terms as governor. (Even though some of Clinton's bitterest Arkansas detractors were among Faubus' strongest allies, a fact that has escaped the national media almost entirely.) Yet even so, Reed cannot bring himself to treat the man with unreserved scorn.

"A biographer," he writes,"ought to be able to say with some conviction that he has found out what makes his subject run. This biographer spent hundreds of hours listening to his subject and looking him in the eye and is forced to admit that Orval Eugene Faubus is more mysterious now than when the process began.... It is not just that he was opaque. He appears still in my mind, even after his death, as an insoluble mixture of cynicism and compassion, of guile and grace, of wickedness and goodness. I have observed his life off and on for forty years, and I still

GENE LYONS *is a columnist with the* Arkansas Democrat-Gazette *and lives in Little Rock, Arkansas.*

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don't know whether he was good or evil, or even whether those are the choices. There was a time when I knew. But that was long ago, and I was young."

Out of the Ozarks

Back at the beginning, Orval Faubus seemed just about the least likely Arkansas politician to lead the state into a racially charged confrontation with the federal government. He grew up in poverty in remote Madison County, deep in the Ozark Mountains near the Missouri border. Slaveholding there, as in much of the upland South, was virtually unknown. More of Faubus' ancestors had supported the Union than the Confederacy during the Civil War. Reed's evocation of Faubus' backwoods hillbilly childhood—his perilous log cabin birth, the rows of tiny infant graves in the cemetery at Combs where his people are buried, the omnipresence of death and disease in an area that resembled a Third World country at least up to World War II—rings with eloquent authenticity. Orval Faubus weighed two-and-a-half pounds at birth; his mother later told people he could have fit into a quart jar with the lid screwed down.

It wasn't keeping blacks down that preoccupied Ozark country folk during the hard-scrabble years of Faubus' childhood. It was staying alive and praising Jesus (although Faubus' own religious beliefs appear to have been largely expedient). Such racial bigotry as existed wasn't a great deal more passionate than generalized suspicion of *all* outsiders. Indeed Faubus' father Sam was a lifelong Socialist and follower of Eugene V. Debs—hence the son's middle name. He preached racial tolerance and the brotherhood of the working man, and there's no evidence that Orval disagreed. Black leaders who became Faubus' antagonists during and after the Central High crisis said they never felt he bore them any personal animosity. His actions were purely opportunistic. Does that make them better or worse?

As a young man during the Depression, Faubus was a migrant worker, riding the rails to Michigan and Washington state to cut timber and pick apples. Back home, he became a country schoolteacher for several years at near-starvation wages before volunteering for the military during World War II, where he saw combat as an Army intelligence officer. By Arkansas standards, he began his political career as a reformer and progressive. How could he not? At the time reformist Democratic Gov. Sid McMath appointed Faubus to the state Highway Commission in 1949, his home county had a total of 12 miles of paved roads.

During his first gubernatorial campaign in 1954 against Gov. Francis Cherry, a Little Rock establishment lawyer who boasted of having cut welfare rolls by 10,000, Faubus' standard stump speech included the story of an old country man whose benefits got cut because he sold a few chickens to generate a bit of extra cash. Deprived of state assistance, the old man had no choice but to take his wife and move in with relatives in California: "The youngest daughter came in and loaded those two old people in a car and drove them away from that house forever and took them away, and they died in a foreign place and were buried there," Faubus would say. "The old man cried as they went down that valley. They said you could have heard him a quarter mile." In the days before welfare became politically equated with blacks, Reed points out, that story played well with rural white Arkansas audiences.

Governor Cherry's second big mistake in 1954 was to redbait Faubus on account of his 1935 attendance at Commonwealth College, a socialist institution that had flourished briefly in the Ouachita Mountains near the town of Mena, Arkansas. Faubus' war record helped protect him, but it was his flagrant lack of candor about his one-time leftist enthusiasms that carried the day. "What made Faubus' lying remarkable," Reed says, "was its sheer imaginative vigor and virtuosity." By election day, he'd given at least seven overlapping but distinct versions of the story, each more self-serving than the one before. Certainly Faubus' actions are mitigated by Cherry's attempt to smear him with what Reed calls "the great lies of American history ... that the Red conspiracy was about to turn us all into cowering, authoritarianized puppies." Lying his way out of tight spots, however, got to be a habit.

Once elected, Faubus went to work on the kind of program favored by his allies at the *Arkansas Gazette*, Little Rock's dominant newspaper: road building, improved teacher salaries, and industrial development. He asked Winthrop Paul Rockefeller, a walking symbol of American capitalism who had recently settled on a cattle ranch on Petit Jean Mountain near Russellville, to head the Arkansas Industrial Development Commission—in effect, serving as the state's ambassador to the world of high finance. All that enterprise got swallowed up by the dark demiurge of race, however, when the Central High integration crisis confronted Faubus with the political challenge, and opportunity, of a lifetime.

Reed's meticulous explication of that sad event occupies the book's middle third, as well as its concluding chapter. "The one big thing that Faubus got wrong," he concludes, "was colossally, biblically wrong. But it was not simple." The plan approved by the Little Rock School Board for complying with *Brown v.*

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Board of Education was the essence of "gradualism." If enacted, it would have effectively delayed all but token integration almost indefinitely. Left to his own devices, Faubus would have let it go forward. But even that was too much for racist demagogues like Jim Johnson, the founder of Arkansas' White Citizen's Council and its most spellbinding orator. A native of Crossett, in south Arkansas near the Louisiana border, Johnson is best-known today for his starring role in the scurrilous Rev. Jerry Falwell-sponsored video called "The Clinton Chronicles." Through the good offices of Floyd Brown's "Citizens United" and *The Washington Times*, Johnson also served as Whitewater figure David Hale's conduit to the national media.

Johnson began to assail Faubus as a "nigger lover" and worse. As the opening day of school approached in September, 1957, he and fellow bigots began a deliberate campaign to convince the governor that blood would flow in the streets of Little Rock if he allowed nine black students to enroll at Central High. Caravans of armed men were said to be headed to Little Rock from all over the state. Whether or not that was ever so remains hard to say. Johnson boasted to Reed that "there wasn't any caravan. But we made Orval believe it. We said, 'They're lining up. They're coming in droves.' ... The only weapon we had was to leave the impression that the sky was going to fall."

An Accidental Racist

The great historical irony of Faubus' calling out the Arkansas National Guard to prevent the Little Rock Nine from enrolling at Central, of course, is that it forced a reluctant President Eisenhower's hand to send in the 101st Airborne to keep the peace and enforce the law. "The constitutional crisis provoked by Orval Faubus in 1957," Reed judges "was a watershed in civil rights history, not because of its success on behalf of 'massive resistance' but precisely because of its failure. Faubus became not only the first bold symbol of its resistance. He also, as it turned out, set in motion the beginning of its end."

In so doing, however, Faubus shamed the state of Arkansas for at least a generation. Embittered by the opposition of many who had backed his progressive agenda—including the *Arkansas Gazette*, which won two Pulitzer Prizes for its editorials urging obedience to law—Faubus turned increasingly reactionary over the next decade. In an effort to cripple the NAACP and root out subversives, the Arkansas legislature passed, and Faubus signed, the notorious Act 10, a measure requiring all state employees and teachers to list under penalty of law every organization they belonged to or contributed to financially. Lest white citizens be "tainted" by non-white blood transfusions, another law required the racial labeling of blood supplies. While the Arkansas State Police turned a blind eye to wide-open casino gambling in Hot Springs, its Criminal Investigation Division became a veritable redneck KGB: devoting extraordinary resources to spying on citizens suspected of subversive tendencies.

"In pursuit of its mission," Reed writes, "the CID infiltrated organizations, tapped telephones, secretly tape-recorded meetings, compiled lists of group members, ... fingered state employees suspected of integrationist or anti-Faubus sympathies, and collected damaging personal information on political opponents and seemingly ordinary citizens. The gumshoes were especially alert for signs of adultery and homosexuality." (The remnants of this ragtag army, it's worth pointing out, have found work with political operatives, tabloid reporters and so-called "mainstream" journalists seeking dirt on Bill and Hillary Clinton. That they've dug up so little real information may indicate how vastly overblown is the President's reputation in this regard.)

How then can Reed summon so much sympathy for Faubus himself? Because in the end the man wasn't evil, merely weak. A hillbilly populist at heart, it was himself more than anybody else whom Faubus betrayed in the debacle at Central High. Rather like the most prominent Arkansas politician of our own era, Reed thinks Faubus "was a natural man of the middle. His gift was for compromise and consensus. When he was not distracted by race and intoxicated by ambition, he wielded that gift with uncommon skill. He had already achieved some of the more realistic goals of the political center when he was overtaken by the Central High crisis. He panicked."

Even so, things might have been worse. Reed speculates about what might have happened if Faubus had called out the Arkansas National Guard not to deny, but to protect those nine brave children from the mob outside Central High in 1957. Might the rabble-rousing Jim Johnson not have taken the governorship away from Faubus in 1958? "As governor of Arkansas, he would have carried the fight to the bitter and certain end," Reed thinks. "The feds might have had to take him by force, along with whatever fellows of fortune who had elected to go down with him. ... And back home, Arkansas would have had to climb out of the abyss once again, much as it had done after the Civil War."

Briskly narrated and beautifully written, Reed's book seems all but certain to become the standard work on the Faubus era, and a minor classic of American political biography. ●

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Friedan Goes Fuzzy

The godmother of feminism searches for a new paradigm and comes up empty-handed

By Marjorie Williams

BEYOND GENDER: The New Politics of Work and Family
By Betty Friedan
Woodrow Wilson Center Press, $22.95

IT WAS A BAD DAY FOR PUBLIC discourse when Jim Pinkerton, an aide in George Bush's White House, announced his search for a "new paradigm" as a corrective (or cover-up, according to Bush's critics) for the domestic policy ennui that was one of that presidency's hallmarks. "Paradigm" has since become the favorite five-dollar word of every policy maven who hopes to persuade the reader that he or she has something bold to say. Betty Friedan's new book is, alas, another example of this phenomenon.

Beyond Gender is a rambling recap of a pair of seminars that Friedan chaired, in 1994 and 1995, at The Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars. These gatherings, ominously billed as New Paradigm Seminars, aimed to define a progressive political movement—or ethos, at least—that would subordinate the identity politics that have dominated liberalism (and feminism) since the late '60s to some vision of the common good. Rounding up the usual suspects from labor, the women's and civil rights movements, academe, journalism, business, and the land of think tanks, Friedan led discussions about the economic instability, the growing gap between rich and poor, and the middle-class time squeeze that she sees as the proper business of progressive politics.

This is, of course, rich territory. But if this slim volume has any virtue, it is as proof that fame, influence, and the well-earned sense of respite that comes at the end of an illustrious career are the enemies of good writing. For it has almost every flaw a non-fiction book can have, including the maddening shallowness that inevitably characterizes even the most lively group conversation. In addition to being scattered and poorly organized, it's full of dizzyingly bad language—sentences that draw a deep breath, sprint to the end of the diving board, and ... never quite land anywhere. The new movement she envisions, Friedan writes, "has to be political to protect and translate our new empowerment with a new vision of community, with new structures of community that open the doors again to real quality of opportunity." These cul-de-sac sentences, which don't actually say anything, abound. "Too often the so-called debate on family values is a debate about abortion or sexual immorality or divorce, but when we talk about the value of families, we are talking about conditions that support and nurture family values." Huh?

Beyond Gender is also out of date, appearing more than two years after most of the meetings it describes. Thus it agonizes breathlessly about the ascendancy of Newt Gingrich, and entirely fails to acknowledge the economy's recent strength. Finally, it exempts itself from the basic rule that a writer on public policy (indeed, any writer) needs to do more than simply gesture in the general direction of the facts she wants to marshal. "In 1992," Friedan writes, "a lot of women were elected, a lot more women came out to vote, a lot of men voted for women, and, of course, by a significant majority of women over men, Bill Clinton was elected president with Hillary Rodham Clinton as his wife despite the Republicans' attack on career women and the Dan Quayle-Murphy Brown thing."

I harp on this last weakness because it seems to betoken a deeper vagueness, amounting to a form of airy contempt for all the workings of politics. Unconsciously, Friedan embodies a vice that has too often plagued the American left: a moral vanity that resists the very idea of politics as a continuing struggle among legitimately competing interests and ideas. Here is her capsule summary of the social policy of the past 70 years: "More than sixty years ago you had Roosevelt, you had the New Deal. You had a whole era of social policy and social progress. Then it looked

MARJORIE WILLIAMS *is a contributing editor of* Vanity Fair *magazine.*

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like we were going to destroy that with the Contract with America. That hasn't happened. The people don't want that all destroyed, but nobody has come up with a new structure, with the kinds of policies that would lead to the common good as a priority for evolution of democracy."

Beyond Gender deals, however inchoately, with important subjects: most provocatively, the question of why liberals (one might say Democrats, were they not creatures of a Jurassic paradigm) have made so little headway with the issue of income disparity. And one of Friedan's great strengths as a leader of the women's movement has been her willingness to combat its more sectarian impulses. She was the first and most important of the third-wave feminists of the '60s and '70s to suggest that they had thrown the babies—the literal babies—out with the bath water, alienating potential followers by refusing to honor the importance of family in most women's lives. More recently, she has questioned the heavy emphasis that the movement's leaders have placed on such issues as abortion, rape, and sexual harassment; they have, she argues in *Beyond Gender*, given short shrift to the workaday issues of economics, child care, and family life that mean far more to the average woman.

But beyond that admirable willingness to question her allies, Friedan's horror of politics means she hasn't much to contribute. Most of the men and woman she brought together in her seminars have thought more rigorously about the issues she is raising for far longer than she has. But they tend to speak from a point of view, whether it is conservative, liberal, or something in between; and the greater the force of their ideas, the more they resist being ground down to the bland, paradigmatic porridge that Friedan hopes to concoct. Whenever one of them takes a clear stand on something—as when conservative former assistant secretary of education Chester Finn suggests that fatherlessness is actually caused by individuals' failing to live up to their responsibilities—Friedan quotes him politely and then changes the subject, like someone tolerating a dinner guest who has said something rude.

My favorite point in the book comes when political scientist Benjamin Barber finally tries to pierce the enervating harmony that rules Friedan's discussions. "We forget that there are real conflicts of interest in America," he says. (One imagines him pulling at his necktie in frustration.) "There are costs, and not everything can be solved painlessly. ... The new paradigm can't pretend there are no conflicts, there are no real distinctions of interest. It has to understand that political action works through conflict." But Friedan steams serenely on, seeming unaware that she is being tactfully instructed in reality.

In sum, skip this book and read instead Friedan's great *The Feminine Mystique*, which came out almost 35 years ago, and will be republished in a new hardcover edition this month. Eons seem to have passed since the book's publication, and entire social continents have shifted. The revelation it holds for readers of today is how strenuously Friedan had to work to advance the radical idea that women were unsatisfied by lives that had no dimension beyond husband and children; what a crowd of shibboleths she was staring down, and how brave it was of her to do it. Reading it, one has some faint sense of how unimaginable a revolution she was urging on her countrywomen, three and a half decades ago, and how remarkable it is that she had the imagination to help set it in motion. ●

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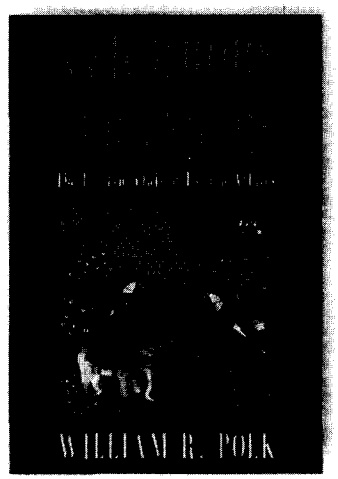

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Memo *of the* Month

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GEORGE V. VOINOVICH, GOVERNOR

TO: All Agency Directors
Data Processing Managers
Fiscal Officers
Telecommunications Coordinators

FROM: Peter J. McGeoch, Assistant Director

SUBJECT: **THE YEAR 2000 - INTRA AGENCY INFORMATION INTERCHANGE OF DATE FORMATS AND LEAP YEAR CALCULATIONS**

PURPOSE:
The purpose of this standard is to establish a common format for the electronic interchange of date and time data between state agencies. These common formats will eliminate any ambiguity between state agency applications. All state agencies need to adhere to this standard in order to become Year 2000 compliant, not only for themselves, but also for other state agencies with whom they share/exchange data. **Note: The effective date of January 1, 1998 is for existing interfaces only; compliance for all new interfaces is immediate.**

REFERENCE:
This is the second in a suite of policies/standards to be issued related to the Year 2000.

LEAP YEAR CALCULATIONS:
All calculations must contain the following logic:

- A Leap Year is determined if the 4-digit year can be divided by 4, UNLESS
- The year can be divided by 100, then it is not a Leap Year, UNLESS
- The year can be divided by 400, then it is a Leap Year, UNLESS
- The year can be divided by 4,000, then it is not a Leap Year, UNLESS
- The Year is 200 or 600 years after a year that is divisible by 900, then it is a Leap Year.

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Political Booknotes

A Win for the Good Guys

by John L. Parker Jr.

IF YOU THOUGHT THAT BLATANT, pervasive, corporate-sponsored racism could not exist in America in the last quarter of the 20th century, read *The Black O: Racism and Redemption in an American Corporate Empire*, by Steve Watkins.

Although it is actually a painstakingly researched account of the largest private civil rights case in U.S. history, at times it reads like an old-fashioned detective story.

In it you'll meet Ray Danner, an animated, banty rooster of a man who became the 266th richest person in America building the multi-million dollar Shoney's restaurant empire. And he did so, apparently, by spending the bulk of his days flying and driving around the South to various company restaurants adjusting thermostats, weighing pieces of fish, and instructing managers to keep black employees either out of sight in the kitchen, or off the payroll altogether. (A blackened "O" in the word Shoney's on an employment application signified to managers that the applicant was black.)

Enter Henry and Billie Elliott, a white married couple who managed a Captain D's seafood restaurant, which is part of the company that also owns Shoney's. They were fired in 1988 primarily because they refused to fire black employees and replace them with white ones at their Panama City, Fla., restaurant.

What happened to the Elliotts, it turns out, was not particularly unusual in Dannerland, but their reaction was. They took their story to Tallahassee attorney Tommy Warren, who had some experience as a civil rights litigator. At the time, Warren wasn't looking to take on any major cases, but the Elliotts' story intrigued him enough to investigate further.

He began pulling on that single loose strand of evidence, and the more he tugged the more incriminating incidents and witnesses he found. After four years and thousands of hours of painstaking detective work and court battles, that single thread eventually unraveled a massive tapestry of intentional, illegal, corporate-wide racist behavior and led to the largest class of plaintiffs ever certified in the federal civil rights action, *Haynes et al. v. Shoney's, Inc.* In 1992, Warren won the largest settlement ever entered in such a case: $132.5 million, the bulk of which was distributed to more than 20,000 victims of the company's discrimination.

THE BLACK O: Racism and Redemption in an American Corporate Empire
By Steve Watkins
The University of Georgia Press, $24.95

But to synopsize this case is to trivialize not only Watkins' book, but also the monumental work of Warren and his co-counsel, Barry Goldstein, making the day-to-day course of the litigation seem mundane and its eventual conclusion pre-ordained. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Shoney's assembled a veritable army of lawyers to defend the indefensible, including Nashville's high-powered Jim Neal (of Watergate fame, and also currently Al Gore's lawyer) and Birmingham's Butch Powell, a bearded, blustery, three-pieced thug who actually told Warren at one point that what he (Powell) wanted most of all from the case was to get Warren disbarred. And he was serious.

If you ever entertained the notion that practicing civil rights law against the likes of Danner, Powell and their various toadies might be an easy way to make a lot of money, this book would quickly disabuse you of that fantasy. Tommy Warren worked exclusively on the case for four years without receiving a penny for it until he was fully victorious.

Watkins, who teaches at Mary Washington College in Fredericksburg, Va., occasionally allows the sheer mass of material generated by this case to overwhelm him (the notes and sources sections in the back of the book go on for 33 pages), but he does an admirable job of making the legal intricacies of a modern civil-rights class action intelligible.

But Watkins brings more than research to this project. The real strength of the book is the story, a narrative as old as David and Goliath, and as modern as *Brown vs. Board of Education*, and it devolves finally, as do all great contests in human affairs, into a passionate clash of wills.

People will do evil things, perhaps out of wrong-headed convictions—as with Ray Danner—or because they are paid well, as were his lawyers. But the impulse to do good often remains something of a mystery.

If we truly believe in fairness and equality, as we say we do, we'd better thank our lucky stars that some among us have that impulse—for the Henry and Billie Elliotts of the world who, against crazy, unwinnable odds, stand up to injustice; and for the Tommy Warrens, who dare to champion them.

JOHN L. PARKER JR., *a former attorney, is an editor and publisher in Tallahassee, Florida.*

Selling Out Strauss

by Michael Lind

IN THE PAST HALF CENTURY, ONE of the most striking phenomena in American intellectual life has been the influence of European émigré intellectuals who fled Hitler (or in some cases Stalin) in the 1930s and 1940s. The American New Left of the 1960s would hardly be conceivable without the influence of Herbert Marcuse and other German

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Marxist émigrés. Postwar-American conservatism also counts among its patron saints intellectual exiles from Europe such as Ludwig von Mises and Eric Voegelin. In *Leo Strauss and the American Right*, Shadia B. Drury, a professor of politics at the University of Calgary in Canada, examines the influence on the American right of one of the most celebrated émigré intellectuals, Leo Strauss (1899-1973).

Strauss, a German Jewish professor of philosophy, taught political science at the University of Chicago after fleeing Nazi Germany. The list of Strauss' students and admirers includes a number of luminaries of the conservative intellectual movement between the 1950s and the 1990s: Willmoore Kendall, Irving Kristol and his son William, Robert Bork, Harvey Mansfield, Alan Keyes, Clarence Thomas, and William Bennett, among others. The late Allan Bloom, in *The Closing of the American Mind*, and Francis Fukuyama, in *The End of History*, have made the larger public and not just the intellectual community aware of Straussian themes.

Straussian thought is hard to wrap your mind around, in part because Strauss and his disciples write in a highly abstract style that keeps trespassers out. Their enemies have accused Straussians of forming a cult, a charge that is risible when it comes from disciples of Marx, Freud, or Derrida. It is true that Strauss believed that many if not most philosophers, for fear of persecution, wrote in ways that concealed their views as much as they revealed them. A secular Jew, Strauss believed that the harsh truths of philosophy should not be publicized, for fear of undermining the public orthodoxy on which any stable community must rest. Strauss and his followers tend to blame both communist and fascist totalitarianism for the undermining of traditional belief systems by intellectuals. "Strauss understood both Weimar and America in terms of Plato's analysis of how democracy gives way to tyranny," Drury writes. "The licentious quality of the American love of freedom and its resemblance to the freedom of Weimar was therefore a reason for disquiet."

From Willmoore Kendall in the 1950s to Irving Kristol today, American conservative thinkers have invoked Strauss' name in arguing for an American public orthodoxy, which (*mirabile dictu*) just happens to coincide with the orthodoxy of the conservative movement and right-wing churches. Of Kristol, Drury writes: "He is so convinced of the political utility of religion that he is blind to the immoderate nature of groups such as the Moral Majority of Jerry Falwell or the Christian Coalition of Pat Robertson and Ralph Reed." The alliance between neoconservative intellectuals and anti-intellectual fundamentalists took a surprising turn recently when Kristol, Bork, and other right-wing intellectuals bravely declared their opposition in public to—Darwinism! (Coming soon: Noah's Ark and the Shroud of Turin!) It is impossible to picture Leo Strauss, a reclusive thinker who shunned political involvement, declaring his belief in creationism at a press conference as part of a strategy for securing the allegiance of the trailer-park South to the GOP.

LEO STRAUSS AND THE AMERICAN RIGHT
By Shadia B. Drury
St. Martin's Press, $35

Drury's account of the relationship between Strauss and other anti-liberal and anti-democratic 19th- and 20th-century German thinkers like Friedrich Nietzche, Carl Schmidt, and Martin Heidegger is generally persuasive. She neglects to point out the extent to which Strauss and his disciples have been philhellenes who emphasized the ancient Greek heritage, which was less important to the American founders than the heritage of Republican and Imperial Rome. This widely shared bias in favor of the Greeks and against the Romans (and Italians) is a legacy of 19th-century German and British Romanticism.

Unfortunately Drury's account of Strauss' thought is far better informed than her discussion of American politics. Drury finds plausible the claim of *The New York Times* that Leo Strauss was the godfather of the 1994 Republican Contract with America. In fact the Contract owed less to the Herr Doktor than to the Spin Doctor. Most Republican leaders probably think that Leo Strauss is a brand of jeans.

Drury treats "neoconservative" and "conservative" as synonyms, even though the most impressive neoconservative intellectuals—Daniel Patrick Moynihan, Daniel Bell, Nathan Glazer, Theodore Draper—refused to fol-

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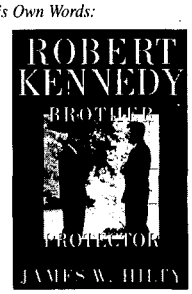

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low Irving Kristol and Norman Podhoretz into an alliance with Pat Robertson and the Business Roundtable. By the early 1990s, the neoconservatives who had joined the Republican party had ceased to differ in any significant respect from old-fashioned Republican conservatives. Drury writes: "The 1996 presidential campaign of Bob Dole and Jack Kemp is a model of the neoconservative philosophy ... ." On the contrary, the contemporary GOP, based on an alliance of big business with Protestant churches, is hardly distinguishable from the Republican Party that existed in the 1920s, when Leo Strauss was still teaching Plato in Germany. The sad fact is that the two postwar conservative intellectual movements in the United States—the largely Catholic movement centered on William F. Buckley Jr., and the more recent, largely Jewish movement of which Irving Kristol was the informal leader—have left little or no trace on the substance of American conservative politics. The conservative intellectuals did not take over the Republican party, but were taken over by it. For example, Catholic and Jewish intellectual conservatives in America have found it expedient to sacrifice the pro-labor strains of European Catholic conservatism and of Cold War liberalism in order to flourish as the house intellectuals for Republican business elites and foundations endowed by dead tycoons. Whatever one thinks of Strauss as a philosopher, he cannot be blamed for the opportunism of his followers.

Richard Weaver, an early conservative intellectual, wrote a once-celebrated book entitled *Ideas Have Consequences.* To judge from the irrelevance of the Straussians and other conservative intellectuals to the actual agenda of the Republican party, he was wrong.

MICHAEL LIND *is the author of* Up From Conservatism.

The Baby in the Bath Water

by Judith Havemann

AN AMAZING SOCIAL PHENOMENON is occurring in this country. More than a million and a half welfare recipients have left the rolls in the past year. About 200,000 poor people are dropping off welfare every month. It is a development so extraordinary and unexpected that no one knows quite what to make of it. Except President Clinton: "The debate is over," he declared in a recent speech in St. Louis. "We now know that welfare reform works."

Not exactly. While the dramatic decrease in welfare recipients is wonderful news, we don't, in fact, know what is going on in the families and communities of people most affected by the new policies, nor do we know the fate of many of the people dropping off the rolls. What we do know, however, is that the old system was horrible, and that the effort to move poor families off the dole and into jobs—if in fact that is what's happening—is a step in the right direction.

COMMON PURPOSE: Strengthening Families and Neighborhoods to Rebuild America
By Lisbeth B. Schorr
Doubleday, $27.50

The ideological engine propelling the dramatic reforms was a Republican belief that welfare caused the high rates of out-of-wedlock births and family disintegration that they consider responsible for the plight of the inner cities and depressed rural areas. Do away with welfare, they argued, and the problems will gradually, if painfully, be cured. This is a policy shift that runs exactly counter to what mainstream social science research has promoted for the past half century.

Lisbeth B. Schorr's new book, *Common Purpose,* flows out of that former mainstream. Uncovering social services programs that work without the strict cutoffs and tough penalties of the new law, Schorr analyzes the common qualities of these gentler efforts, figures out how they can be expanded, and then scathingly explains why they haven't been.

Some will say Schorr is too late. Even as she was researching her book, Congress reversed the social course of the nation, making her solutions seem less attainable than four years ago. To the architects of the new order, she will seem like a military theorist saying to the developer of the tank, "Wait, I have some smart new strategies to improve the horse cavalry."

But *Common Purpose* is still highly relevant. The book's scope is far broader than just welfare. To begin with, it deals with the grave problems in the nation's child protective services, in schools, and in disadvantaged communities in general. Furthermore, in ferreting out the elements of successful programs, the author has pinpointed precisely the areas where the current social strategies are most vulnerable. Her analysis of the flaws and the reason for the failures of past efforts could not be more pertinent to what is now under way.

For instance, no conservative author of the welfare overhaul could be more trenchant about the bureaucracy that strangles social service offices than Schorr. She recounts the story of Leticia Johnson, a homeless drug addict who couldn't take a vacant bed in a detoxification unit because she didn't have proof of an address and couldn't get emergency treatment for a bad infection because she only had a temporary Medicaid card. Or take the case of YouthBuild, a program which teaches inner city youngsters to build low income housing while attending school about half the time. After spreading successfully from New York to Boston, from San Francisco to Cleveland, Tallahassee, and Gary, all the while achieving 85 percent attendance and 67 percent completion rates, YouthBuild applied for funds from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The department agreed to provide the cash, only to shelve the successful model used in the pilot and replace it with a do-your-own-thing approach, scattering the money to untested models advanced by applicants in the public housing field. No wonder conservatives were able to discredit the government's social policies.

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Schorr also describes how many programs are judged by how much they spend, how many people they can get to show up, and their timeliness in meeting paperwork requirements—rather than by whether they have helped the people they were designed to serve. This problem has escalated rather than diminished under the new welfare regime. Clinton and the nation's governors are declaring victory over intractable social problems on the basis, not of a handful of numbers, but on a single one: the decline in caseload.

The problems Schorr identifies are the right ones, and her suggested solutions are sound. Unfortunately, in the current climate many of Schorr's ideas may go ignored. For instance, one of her suggestions is to undertake a major national project called the Human Intervention Mapping Project, an effort to track, in minute detail, what works to alleviate poverty. It would run alongside its human genome prototype. Great idea. But who will pay for it?

JUDITH HAVEMANN *covers social issues for* The Washington Post.

Hunting Che

by Joseph A. Page

OVER THE PAST THREE DECADES, the end game played out by Che Guevara, the Bolivian army, and its U.S. mentors has been a source of inspiration for writers and filmmakers alike. The results have ranged from a first-rate novel by Jay Cantor (*The Death of Che Guevara*) to a beyond-dreadful Hollywood film with Omar Sharif in the title role ("Che").

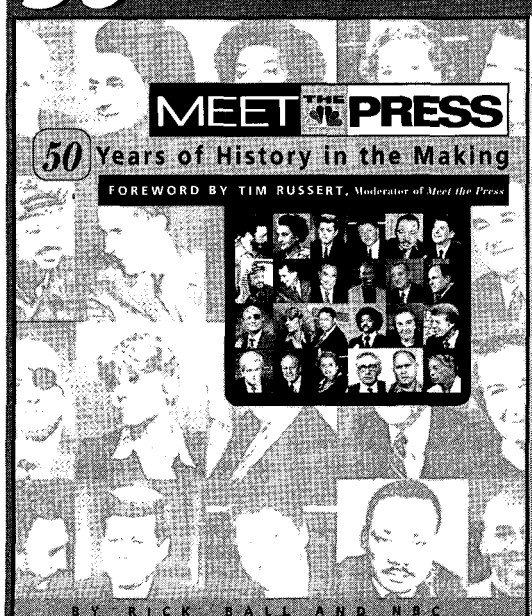
The 30th anniversary of Guevara's death has sparked a renewal of interest, a spate of books, and a "Che chic" phenomenon exploited by memorabilia merchants and entrepreneurs who bring starry-eyed tourists to the remote backlands where a Bolivian Ranger battalion cornered, captured, and summarily executed the Argentine-born revolutionary on October 9, 1967.

THE FALL OF CHE GUEVARA: A Story of Soldiers, Spies, and Diplomats
By Henry Butterfield Ryan
Oxford University Press, $27.50

The romantic figure of Che Guevara has remained as dominant during this revival as it was in his heyday as the paladin of Fidel Castro-style revolutionary communism. But there is another, hitherto-untold side to the story of his demise. *The Fall of Che Guevara*, a brisk monograph by retired U.S. Foreign Service Officer Henry Ryan, peers through the lenses of Guevara's pursuers—American diplomats, military men, and intelligence operatives, and to a lesser extent their Bolivian counterparts. The result is a case study of perhaps the most successful counterinsurgency effort ever launched by the U.S. government.

Utilizing official documents and interviews with many of the participants, Ryan reconstructs the responses of the State Department, Pentagon, and Central Intelligence Agency as they

50 YEARS OF TOUGH QUESTIONS



"Meet the Press" was born on NBC television November 6, 1947 and quickly became a national institution. Major news stories broke on the air, as tough questioning elicited hidden truths from world and national leaders. This book is a magnificent record of TV's most enduring journalistic achievement, illustrated with hundreds of memorable photographs.

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...AND HISTORY-MAKING ANSWERS

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played lead roles, at times in concert and at times discordantly, in the hunt for Guevara and his band of mostly Cuban guerrillas.

Guevara, Ryan argues, was carrying out Cuban foreign policy as encapsulated in the slogan that "The duty of all revolutionaries is to make revolution." His goal was to trigger an armed conflict that would convert South America into another Vietnam, and he chose mountainous Bolivia because of its strategic location. The original idea was to use it as a staging area and supply center for insurgencies in adjacent countries. Later, the plan shifted and Bolivia itself became the target.

Washington had responded to the Cuban Revolution by creating the Army's so-called Green Berets to fight low-intensity conflicts; by training and equipping local military and police; and by using economic and social aid to strengthen their internal security. "In Bolivia," Ryan notes, "the American theory of counterinsurgency and the Cuban theory of revolution met head-on."

The specter of Vietnam was everywhere. The White House was determined not to let the conflict in Bolivia escalate and become Americanized. Early on the decision was made to keep the direct U.S. presence in Bolivia to an absolute minimum and to provide the Bolivian army with only the support it actually needed to defeat the guerrillas. The Viet Cong's use of weapons captured from U.S. troops influenced the decision not to give the Bolivian army the up-to-date hardware its generals were requesting. Finally, the setting of a limited, achievable goal—the destruction of Guevara's guerrilla band—reflected a lesson learned from the open-ended involvement that was producing a quagmire for U.S. forces in southeast Asia.

Ryan offers a thoughtful critique of both the operational and intelligence-gathering aspects of the U.S. intervention against the Cuban intervention in Bolivia. He demonstrates how slow the Americans were to recognize that Che was actually in Bolivia by 1966, as well as their failure to grasp that the lack of support he was getting from the Bolivian Communist Party was seriously hampering his efforts. Ryan also describes the CIA's success in putting together an intelligence system for the Bolivians and the blundering by one of its field agents, whose overzealousness led to erroneous reports that agency operatives had killed Guevara. These accounts suggest that the agency may be able to perform information-gathering tasks more effectively than high-profile action projects whose covertness can easily be shed, hence the book is relevant to the current debate over the proper role of the CIA in the post-Cold War era.

Ryan enlivens his narrative with vivid portraits of the two American officials who played key parts in the hunt for Guevara: Ambassador Douglas Henderson, whose sang-froid helped keep the U.S. from overreacting to the guerrilla threat; and Ralph "Pappy" Shelton, who led the Green Beret contingent that trained the Bolivian Rangers and developed a much warmer rapport with local peasants than the Cubans who came to "liberate" them.

However, he fails to give the Bolivians the attention they merit, which is ironic in light of the on-the-mark criticism he levels at some American officials for their condescending attitude toward the South Americans. President René Barrientos Ortuno is a major player in the story Ryan tells, but we learn nothing about his background that might shed light on his actions, despite the fact that he was a larger-than-life character, an embodiment of Latin American machismo and Bolivia's best pilot. (When three airmen were killed in a parachute jump at an air show while he was commander in chief of the air force, the press suggested the accident was caused by faulty equipment; whereupon Barrientos asked journalists to choose one of the three chutes used by the dead men, took the parachute that was selected and made a successful jump with it.) Moreover, the Bolivian military's eagerness to obtain modern armaments would have been made more comprehensible by an explanation of the continuing national obsession with regaining the corridor to the Pacific Ocean that Bolivia had lost during a 19th century war with Chile.

These are minor shortcomings that do not seriously detract from this engrossing book. It is a welcome addition to the literature on both Che Guevara and U.S. intervention in Latin America.

JOSEPH A. PAGE, *author of* The Brazilians *and* Peron: A Biography, *is a professor at the Georgetown University Law Center.*

Spies Like Us

by Sandeep Puri

THE FILE: A Personal History
By Timothy Garton Ash
Random House, $23

AS A TWENTY-SOMETHING COLlege graduate in the early 1980s, Timothy Garton Ash went to live in East and West Berlin. He worked as a clandestine journalist, he studied, he made friends, he roamed around the country, and he thought hard about life in a communist country. He was eventually banned from visiting East Germany because of the journalistic accounts of his experiences that he published in West Germany. Nearly a decade later, when the files of the STASI, East Germany's secret police, became available for people to read, he asked to see the file on him.

Ash was astonished to receive hundreds of pages detailing his movements in East Berlin and recounting his conversations. The informants included people with whom he had only a passing acquaintance as well as his good friends. As he read through the contents of the file, Ash was struck by a simple question: What makes one person loyal and another a snitch? And he set out on a journey back to East Germany in hopes of answering it.

Upon meeting those who had informed on him, Ash would frequently pop a question like, "... do you have an inkling why I have sought you out today?" The informant would reply no, and the conversation would begin. One informant, "Michaela," when being confronted with evidence of her

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cooperation with the STASI, replied that someone of her position was "obliged" to cooperate. She reports that she tried to tell as many harmless details as possible and that she hoped that this cooperation would make it easier to enjoy privileges like foreign travel. As she reads the pages of information that Ash provides her from his file, she begins to realize the harm in what she has done: "I can't read any more. I feel sick, I want to puke." Ash discovers that Michaela's betrayals included not only him, but also the West German boyfriend of her stepdaughter.

The informant is not the only participant who feels anguish. Ash also becomes uncomfortable during his confrontations, at times wondering whether he is justified in disrupting someone's life. When he meets Frau R., someone whom Ash had considered a friend, he tells her of his discovery of her cooperation with the secret police. "So what should I do? Jump out of the window?" she responds. She denies knowing that she was considered an informer and refuses to look at the evidence Ash has brought to show her. She then begins to describe her life under communism. "[A]s she talks—with pathos now—of the horrors of the camps, of her dead husband, of her faraway son, we both understand that she is placing the weight of her suffering into the scales of my judgement. The weight is heavy. Within minutes I am telling her that I have no right to sit here as her judge." As Ash leaves he asks himself, "By what right, for what good purpose, did I deny an old lady, who had suffered so much, the grace of selective forgetting?"

Ash recognizes that whatever betrayal he feels is nothing compared to what East German victims must feel. He mentions the case of one person who had been imprisoned for five years under the communist regime for attempting to escape. This person, upon reading her file, discovered that it was the man with whom she was currently living who had denounced her to the STASI.

SANDEEP PURI *is a management consultant living in New York City. He lived and worked in Berlin in 1991.*

Aide Memoire

by Matthew Cooper

THEY'RE ON EVERY CAMPAIGN—the fresh-faced twenty- and thirty-somethings who herd the press from one event to another, who make sure the motorcade gets where it's going, who make sure the candidate has his beloved Diet Coke by his side. Ken Chitester was one of those campaign types. An Indiana native working in Arkansas, he signed on to the Clinton campaign in 1992. When Clinton took office, Chitester wrangled a job with the news analysis group in the White House, the people who put together the newspaper clips about Clinton. Each morning the inch-thick stack compendium of clips is read by major honchos in the White House. For someone like Chitester, it was a heady experience—despite the drudgery of the work, it afforded him a proximity to power that few pols ever know.

Still, the long hours took their toll. "I came to realize that working at the White House is like eating chocolate cake, no matter how delicious you think it is, if you eat it for breakfast,

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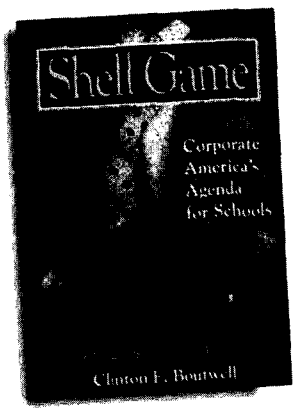

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lunch, and dinner, seven days a week, 365 days a year, you will get sick of it." That may sound like hubris. But after reading this entertaining diary you'll agree. The mind-numbing procession of 4:30 a.m. wake up calls, 10,000-mile plane rides, and staff bickering are enough to make anyone tired. Because the clips are so valuable, Chitester wound up on virtually every presidential flight using his laptop computer to get the latest news reports.

ABOARD AIRFORCE ONE: 200,000 Miles With a White House Aide
By Ken Chitester
Fithian Press, $15.95

Despite his access, Chitester—who I knew casually when I was covering the White House—doesn't dish much dirt. His former colleagues and the Clintons will continue to like him. But even if there's nothing scandalous here, there are plenty of interesting observations about the life of a staffer. "It was amazing how seriously people took the packages of news clippings we produced each morning," he writes. "A lot of folks got them who didn't even need them—they just wanted to be on the distribution list because somebody else was, and they didn't want to be left out. The insecurity people had there, their defensiveness and addiction to perks and perceived power, never ceased to amaze me." As for Clinton himself, Chitester has all the conventional observation about the president's stamina, appetite, intelligence. Still, it's amazing to be reminded that the leader of the free world greets people by saying: "Hey, man, how's it goin'?"

On one level, this is a likable tale about an unpretentious guy—while in Tokyo a homesick Chitester eats at Denny's—who makes it to the Big Show. But it's also a depressing reminder that much of the presidency has become a giant road production—a cavalcade of showy trips designed to get good press. In theory, it's important for the president to get out of Washington. But whenever Air Force One lifts up from Andrews, the president is so isolated—as are his staff and the press corps—that they might as well be in a TV studio. The hermetically sealed world of the president is probably inevitable. And yet it's hard not to feel deep nostalgia for the Truman era when the aides were fewer and when the president crossed the street to Blair House he did it by himself without a bevy of sycophants.

Two other points: Chitester's book is also an important reminder that politics and campaigns remain a pretty meritocratic endeavor where kids from modest backgrounds and state colleges can find themselves in exciting positions. And there is this truism: The Clinton White House can be a casually cruel place. Just as Harold Ickes, the president's friend of 25 years had to read in the paper that he was out on his rear, Chitester had a similarly inelegant departure. When he decided to leave the White House, he tried to resign—but couldn't get anyone to return his calls.

MATTHEW COOPER, *a contributing editor of* The Washington Monthly, *is a national correspondent for* Newsweek.

Brain Drain

by Matthew Miller

A BOOK CALLED *How the Mind Works* by an acclaimed science writer has to be important, so I'm a little ashamed that I had such a hard time reading it. Steven Pinker is the energetic cognitive scientist at MIT whose previous work, *The Language Instinct*, was a much-hailed bestseller. Here, Pinker synthesizes and defends the view of the mind that's emerged from two distinct but increasingly intertwined strains of modern science: evolutionary psychology (which argues that our minds, like our bodies, are the product of eons of Darwinian natural selection), and artificial intelligence (which, by replicating human processes, sheds light on the engineering feats involved in mundane activities like guzzling a beer). Pinker argues persuasively, if hardly romantically, that the mind is "a system of organs of computation, designed by natural selection to solve the kind of problems our ancestors faced in their foraging way of life." The book articulates and applies this approach—amounting to what Pinker dubs "reverse engineering the psyche"—to everything from our eyes' design and the nature of altruism to the thorny question of why humans still find poems, jokes, and even love indispensable.

HOW THE MIND WORKS
By Steven Pinker
W.W. Norton and Company, $29.95

Though Pinker's sprawling inventory of today's science is often compelling, the more interesting thing may be the eerie feeling you get from using your mind to read all this cold detail about, well, your mind. It's like eavesdropping on a conversation between people who you suddenly feel certain know you better than you know yourself, as they parse what you presumed were your unfathomable (and charming) mysteries.

But that was when I was awake. Other reviewers have already hailed Pinker's latest as "always sparkling," calling Pinker himself "a top-rate writer" who "deserves the superlatives that are lavished on him." Well, yes, but won't anyone else 'fess up and say that much of the book is unreadable? To be sure, Pinker's prose is often lively, and the text is dotted with pop-culture references to the "Twilight Zone," "Saturday Night Live," Dr. Strangelove, and Don Corleone. But Pinker's desire to make the science go down easy can't compensate for hundreds of sentences like this one: "The other answer is that the unique pattern of symbol manipulations triggered by the first symbol mirrors the unique pattern of relationships between the referent of the first symbol and the referents of the triggered symbols." Got that? Fortunately, as with Dickens, it

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turns out you can skip 10 pages here or there and not really lose the drift. But then Dickens had an excuse: he was paid by the word.

It's hard to know what to make of this disappointment. I don't think it's that I'm a lazy anti-science philistine—for example, I devoured a book that covered some of Pinker's ground more grippingly, Robert Wright's *The Moral Animal.* And Pinker's vivid explanations of many points make it clear the fault does not lie entirely with him. So perhaps the problem lies not with ourselves, but with our science. It's just not as easy as it was in, say, 1750, for a reasonably intelligent layman to follow the march of science while also staying awake.

MATTHEW MILLER *is a senior writer at* U.S. News & World Report *and a syndicated columnist.*

A Famous Feud

by Kevin A. Swope

THE RIFT BETWEEN ROBERT F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson was the central fault line running down the center of the Democratic party at the time of the party's greatest influence since the 1930s. In his new book, Jeff Shesol makes a strong argument that it is impossible to "fully comprehend either [man] without considering his relationship with the other." Although the various biographers of each man have of necessity discussed the Kennedy-Johnson rivalry, none has covered the matter as comprehensively or as well as Shesol does here.

The bad blood between the two can be traced back to Johnson's rather anemic campaign for the Democratic presidential nomination in 1960, only to crystallize during JFK's administration.

Despite the president's efforts to include him in important discussions, Johnson was a virtual nonentity in the Kennedy administration, an object of derision for the New Frontier loyalists. When Johnson became president in November 1963, Kennedy aides reacted with the same incredulity as Franklin Roosevelt's staff had 18 years earlier when a former haberdasher was called upon to fill the shoes of the man whom they would continue to call "the President" well after April 1945. But Roosevelt had not been assassinated, nor had he an obvious successor for New Dealers to rally around. Almost from the moment he assumed office, Lyndon Johnson's chief political worry was the threat of a Kennedy restoration. He was hardly alone. For most pundits, the question was not whether RFK would seek the presidency, but when.

Shesol is a bit mingy in acknowledging LBJ's virtues. For example, he notes that the Kennedy administration had already lined up the necessary votes in the House to pass his civil rights act by November 1963. While this may be true, everyone knew that the real battle would be in the Senate where, as Jesse Helms has so recently demonstrated, geriatric Southern conservatives are still masters of obstruction. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965 remain President Johnson's greatest accomplishments.

Yet for the most part, it is difficult to fault Shesol's judgment as he relates instance after well-documented instance of Johnson's pettiness and insecurity regarding the Kennedys. It is a backhanded testament to LBJ's remarkable industry that he was able to launch the Great Society and fight the Vietnam War, given all the time he lavished on foiling RFK initiatives. What is one to make of a man who not only questioned the propriety of burying the younger Kennedy in Arlington National Cemetery, but also left it to his successor to appropriate money for the memorial's upkeep? (Not many people can claim to have been outclassed by the Nixon administration.) While the animosity was hardly one-sided and the President would have been foolish to ignore Kennedy's potential as an opponent, Shesol's use of the term "paranoid" to describe some of Johnson's actions is not out of order.

MUTUAL CONTEMPT: Lyndon Johnson, Robert Kennedy, and the Feud that Defined a Decade
By Jeff Shesol
W.W. Norton & Company, $32.50

Even as John Kennedy's star has dimmed over the years, there still remains the glimmer of possibility about Robert. Shesol acknowledges the former attorney general's flaws but leaves little doubt as to where his sympathies lie in the Johnson-Kennedy feud. He echoes the words of numerous Kennedy partisans in suggesting that the hard-as-nails attorney general "grew" into a genuine champion of the downtrodden in the years following his brother's death. He also makes the intriguing suggestion that RFK's suspicion of bureaucracies and iconoclasm presaged Bill Clinton's "New Democrats." (It is a bit of a reach to believe that Bobby Kennedy is what Sam Nunn and LBJ son-in-law Chuck Robb had in mind when they founded the Democratic Leadership Committee.) But he is not alone in wondering—like many of those who care for Democratic ideals—whether Robert Kennedy could have succeeded where Hubert Humphrey and George McGovern failed, leading a unified party into the 1970s. If there is a flaw in Shesol's account, it is a failure to keep the reader fully abreast of "the big picture." The Republican party is but a chimera in the book, emerging from the mists to claim victory in the 1966 elections before vanishing again; the reader is assumed to know already the general arc of the civil rights movement; and while his discussion of the Vietnam War is strong, his failure to mention that the American media is now judged to have fumbled in its coverage of the Tet Offensive (see Peter Braestrup's *The Big Story*) is an oversight worth noting. More importantly, the reader is left wondering what the Kennedy-Johnson schism meant in the broader context of the unraveling of the Democratic party. If *Mutual Contempt* makes the entire eight-year period prior to March 1968 seem a prelude to Robert Kennedy's campaign against Lyndon Johnson for the presidential nomination, it is a conflict without a climax.

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Johnson's withdrawal from the race two weeks later and Sirhan Sirhan ensured that neither would be the party's standard bearer in 1968. That the party proceeded to self-destruct at its August convention demonstrates that the fissures within the Democratic party ran much deeper than the competing ambitions of these two men. The narrative ends rather abruptly with the departure of its principals from political life; a more detailed examination of the legacy of these two remarkable figures would have been appropriate.

Shesol is so skillful in handling what he has chosen to include in his book that it is perhaps a bit unfair to complain about what he left out. He makes excellent use of both published and archival sources, including recently released dictabelt tapes of Johnson's White House telephone conversations. A talented writer, Shesol demonstrates the rare gift for clarity without sacrificing complexity.

KEVIN A. SWOPE *is a Ph.D. candidate in American History at Columbia University.*

A Weak Antidote

by Steven E. Schier

THE RECENT CAMPAIGN MADness detailed in this fall's Senate hearings has turned the sins and shortcomings of our elections system into the topic du jour. As such, one might look with high hopes to Victor Kamber, veteran Democratic campaign consultant, to provide some valuable lessons about what has gone wrong in our electoral process. One would be disappointed.

In *Poison Politics*, Kamber takes a valiant stab at providing insight into our political process, but ultimately comes up short because his arguments need more elaboration and his book lacks a disciplined scope. Kamber, in fits and starts, advances two main points: First, that certain despicable campaign practices have soured the public on politics. Second, that Republicans have poisoned electoral politics and public policy since 1980. The first argument is easier to define and sustain than the second. Unfortunately, the vast majority of the book's sprawling 18 chapters is devoted to advancing the "evil Republicans" charge. And since Kamber offers little in this indictment that kindred observers on the left have not already stated more cogently, many of his chapters make for a tedious, drearily familiar read. Those on left will encounter an echo chamber of their own thoughts; those on the right have surely heard all this before.

POISON POLITICS:
Are Negative Campaigns Destroying Democracy?
By Victor Kamber
Insight Books, $27.95

Kamber's strong liberalism leads him to frequent name-calling and questionable evidence to support his thesis. Republicans are guilty of "greedy Puritanism" and "grinch economics"; under Ronald Reagan "the fabric of our nation quietly unraveled"; and so forth. Much of this may be true, but Kamber can't be bothered with assembling evidence. As a campaign consultant, he seems to gain great satisfaction from rhetoric alone.

This is not to say that the book doesn't have some redeeming features. The chapters that bring Kamber's accumulated wisdom to bear on the subject of campaign practices are original and worth taking seriously. Kamber points out how far is too far when going negative, offering vivid examples from recent campaigns of attacks on candidates' character, race, gender, or sexual orientation that will make most readers' stomachs turn. Just about every example involves Republicans attacking Democrats. Is this a representative sample? It's hard to tell, but Kamber's choice of examples nicely fits the strong ideological spin of the book.

Some of Kamber's points about campaign ads, however, are questionable. He argues, without significant evidence, that negative advertising doesn't depress electoral turnout. Political scientists Stephen Ansolabehere and Shanto Iyengar provide a mass of systematic, contrary evidence in their recent book *Going Negative*. Kamber also argues that negative ads are not manipulative. They merely, in his words, "appeal to emotion instead of reason." Isn't that a central characteristic of manipulation?

The book does provide some thoughtful proposals for the hot topic of campaign finance reform. Though Kamber favors lowering PAC contribution levels (to the current $1,000 individual level), he does not join the chorus endorsing the McCain-Feingold ban on soft money to political parties. Instead, the book focuses on demand-side reforms. Kamber would give four hours of free airtime to each party during their national conventions, and additional radio and television time to the parties during the fall campaigns. Not only would this lessen the "money chase," but it would also channel more political communication through the parties, helping to curb our current riot of candidate individualism. Stronger party messages might actually improve public comprehension of campaign messages—an outcome devoutly to be wished.

Also worth considering are Kamber's reform proposals for partial public financing of congressional elections, a ban on new ads during the last week of an election, and extensive disclaimers in independent expenditure ads. All of these ideas, though, need greater exposition than Kamber provides. He seldom spends more than a paragraph or two explaining any of these proposals. The whole reform discussion occupies only one chapter.

Poison Politics is ultimately a victim of its own sprawl. Kamber has opinions on lots of subjects—political history, rhetoric, economic and social policy, suburbanization, Presidents Reagan and Clinton, progressivism, and electoral politics—and has tried to cram them into one book. He sprints from topic to topic, spouting opinions instead of giving the reader what he or she really could use: evidence that is better balanced and a more sustained analysis of the problems with campaigns and how to reform them.

STEVEN E. SCHIER *teaches political science at Carleton College in Northfield, Minn., and directs the Carleton College Washington program.*

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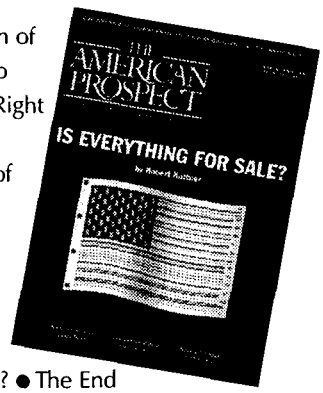

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God's Long Summer

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Charles Marsh

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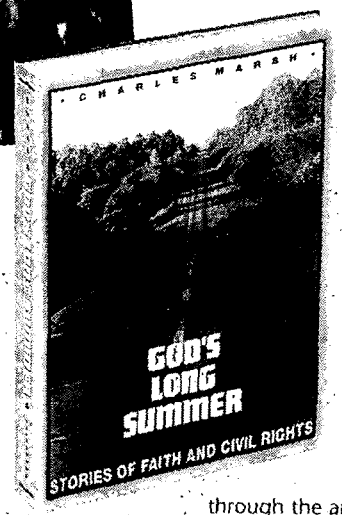

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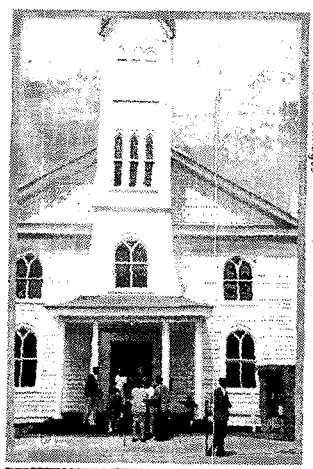

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